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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE COQUETTE,

AND OTHER

TALES AND SKETCHES,

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

	Page
TO LADY GRAHAM	1
THE FORSAKEN CHILD	7
ON READING AN OLD LETTER	85
THE FRIEND OF OUR EARLY DAYS	95
THE FORSAKEN	99
THE LOST ELECTION	105
MONA WATER	143
LINES ON THE DEATH OF THE STAG	153
THE FORSAKEN	163
THE YOUNG HEIR'S DEATH-BED	179
LINES	195
I DO NOT ASK THY LOVE FROM FATE	199
KATE BOUVERIE	205
CHRISTMAS	247
ON THE DEATH OF SIR WALTER SCOTT	261

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TO LADY GRAHAM.

VOL. II.

B

TO LADY GRAHAM.

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

I.

ROSE! with thy young buds opening to the day,
In fair and delicate beauty like thine own ;
Small, fairy copies of thy features' play,
Unconscious mimics of thy voice's tone.
Accept for them—for thee—a wish sincere—
Ah! could such wishes like warm sunbeams fall,
To gild the coming of each anxious year,
How much would hope avert, or love recal!

II.

Few can their pausing glances backward throw,
Nor feel thick-gathering tear-drops dim their gaze:
Few can look forward with a cheerful glow
And hail the promise of more happy days.
But Thou!—The old year (when its course was new)
Twin birds of promise to thy bosom sent—
And the new year seems opening to thy view
With a dear dream of measureless content.

III.

May that New Year be bright to them and thee;
As bright as their inherited beauty seems;
And thy heart own through its futurity,
(Like a child's slumber,) none but *happy* dreams.
And oh! when Time, with gently stealing pace,
Shall print his touch upon that open brow—
And, passing, mellow with a graver grace
The still unfaded beauty of its snow:

IV.

When fairy Constance smooths each careless curl
That now waves lightly round her tiny head,
When the gay child becomes a graceful girl
With blushing cheek—shy glance—and fawnlike
tread;—

When love hath shadowed down those laughing eyes,
(Ah! be *her* love a happy one—like thine,)
And all the hidden soul that in them lies,
Like an unrisen star,—hath learnt to shine:—

V.

When change without shall answer change within,
And *her* expression alters like thine own,
From the calm innocence which knew not sin,
To the bright purity which shuns, when known:
When her young girlish loveliness brings back
The winning beauty of thine early day
To him who shares thy life's advancing track,
And bids him pause to bless thee on the way:—

VI.

Oh, then, still worshipped in thy quiet home,
(The place where woman's worshippers should be,)
When all those busy memories crowding come,
Which made existence dear to him and thee—
May the New Year be still a welcome sound,
Though coldly gleams the grey and wintry sky,
And all the sunshine which thy heart hath found
Smile on thy lip and sparkle in thine eye!

THE FORSAKEN CHILD.

THE FORSAKEN CHILD.

CHAPTER I.

“MY boy! Henry, I cannot leave my boy!”

Such were the words, wildly repeated over and over again (as if they contained all the reasoning or argument of which she was capable), uttered by Madeline Wentworth, as she sat convulsively sobbing, her face buried in her hands, and her whole frame shaking with a paroxysm of despairing grief. By her side stood a handsome, sickly-looking man, on

whose pale brow more perplexity than sympathy was visible, and who seemed impatiently waiting till the fit should subside sufficiently to enable her to hear him. Twice his lips parted, and his arm fell from the marble mantel-piece where he had been leaning, and twice he relinquished the attempt to soothe that misery of which he was at once the cause and the witness. At length the tempest ceased; the weary head sank back on his arm, and the weary eyes looked up to his in melancholy silence, as if hoping for counsel.

“ Madeline ! my beloved Madeline, calm yourself ; believe me, I have not a selfish wish or thought concerning you. If you find you cannot, after all, make up your mind to take a decided step ; if the society of your child can make such a home bearable, remain in it ;

I would not press you to do aught for which hereafter you might reproach me. It is not for the sake of my own wild dream of happiness—to see those sweet eyes shining upon me through the long day—to hear those sweet lips welcome me ever on my return to *our* home with words of tenderness—to be able to call you mine—my own, that I have urged this measure upon you. It is because my heart is bursting at all that you endure; your tears, your complaints have maddened me.

“If I could know you away, safe from the brutality of the man to whom you have been sacrificed—if I could know you at peace, I should be happy, though I were doomed never to see your face again! Did not your own letter bring me to your side? that letter so full of love and of despair, that, surrounded as I

was by fools and chatterers, I could not repress the groan that burst from my lips as I read it! Did not your own promise embolden me to make arrangements for your departure while *he* was absent? and now, my Madeline, weakened by momentary agitation, you would relinquish plans which have been the work of months to contrive. You have a home so wretched, that life seems scarce worth having on such terms; a man whose temper and character are so well known, that the harshest of condemning tongues will speak *your* name in pity and sorrow; and even those whispers," said Henry Marchmont eagerly, as she shrank from his side—"even those whispers you shall not hear. We will go to Italy, to Spain, to the wilds of America, where you will, so that we forget all but our own love, our own existence.

“Your child—nay, hear me without weeping, Madeline ; hear me, and *then* decide, (you have still the power to decide on remaining). Your child will not be left desolate—an only son—the heir to a peerage. Do you think that ambition and self-interest will not watch him with as careful a solicitude as your own, if not with the same tenderness? Do you think that the boastful spirit of Lionel Wentworth will suffer the guards of his future prosperity to slumber? Even if the father had no father’s feeling, he would foster and cherish his brother’s heir.

“Lord Wentworth has paid his debts, settled an annuity upon him, and shown more apparent kindness than ever he evinced, till the birth of your boy gave a hope of continuing the title

and estates in a direct line. Their whole souls are centered in that child : and you, my Madeline, you would relinquish my love, and drag on a life of wretchedness for a vain shadow—the hope of devoted affection, from that little being whose first few years are all that ever can be yours. *You* think of your infant child ; but will the boy at Eton, who neither sees nor comprehends your love or your sorrow ; will the youth at college, who considers a week at home a tax on his holidays ; will the heir presumptive to the Wentworth property, finishing his education on the continent, and rarely writing you a hurried letter—will *he* be so great a comfort, so dear a pleasure, as to counterbalance all this lonely misery ? Will there not be hours, days, years, when you may regret the love that could

only end with life ; that love which would have haunted your steps like a shadow, and given a new youth to your withering days ? ”

Madeline Wentworth left her home, her child, her husband, and learnt that there is no misery like the curse of remorse—no tears so bitter as those in which self-reproach is mingled. It was all true that Henry Marchmont had averred ; true that her husband was selfish, brutal, violent ; true that many had pitied her for being his wife ; true that her boy was the spoilt idol of calculating hearts, in a family where there were no heirs ; true that her lover was devoted to her, heart and soul ; but which of all these truths quenched the agony of her heart, when, as they sat together, awaiting the arrival of dinner at a comfortless inn on the road, the sunset hour

brought to her mind a picture she never again was to witness?—a picture of that little rosy head hushed to its innocent and early rest, with the white curtains drawn close round it to mellow the evening light, and herself bending tenderly, cautiously, silently above it; to print the gentle kiss, and breathe the whispered blessing of a mother's good night! It rose—it grew more and more distinct—that imagined scene; and as her head sank on her clasped and quivering hands, and the thought flashed through her brain that it might lisp her name on the morning, or wail for a sight of her familiar face, and be checked by harsh and angry voices, Henry Marchmont's presence, and Henry Marchmont's caress, had no power to check the bitter exclamation—"My child! my forsaken child!"

Years passed away—five years, whose com-

parative happiness might have stifled the voice of self-reproach in Madeline Wentworth's heart. Divorced from the man she hated, married to him she loved, watched, shielded, worshipped, and the mother of two beautiful children; might she not dream that Heaven's justice slept, or that for *her* there seemed so many excuses, that her crime was judged more mercifully than that of others? She was spared most of the common miseries of her situation. She had not to bewail the inconstancy or growing coldness of the being for whose sake she had forfeited the love and esteem of all beside. She had not to endure the mortification which the scorn of the more prudent could inflict; for no wounded bird ever crept away more wearily to die, than Madeline shrank from human notice. She had not to struggle with hardship and poverty, after

having been accustomed to all the comforts and superfluities of a luxurious home.

Henry Marchmont was well off; his uncle's estates and baronetcy were to be his, and not only *his*, but would descend to his boy. She was spared even that misery, that last worst misery—the consciousness that the innocent were to suffer for *her* sin—her children were not illegitimate. Of the one she had left, accounts were transmitted from time to time, during the first few months which had followed her departure, through the means of the nurse, who was sincerely attached both to the child and its mother; but afterwards Madeline had the sorrow to learn, that this woman had been sent away by Mr. Wentworth, when he discovered that she communicated with her late mistress, and that her boy was placed under

the care of a stranger, who neither knew her love nor felt for her sorrow.

Anxiously Madeline used to glean the vague reports which, from time to time, reached her of the well-being of this precious charge. Eagerly, when they received English newspapers, did she read over and over again the few words in the Morning Post which announced the annual departure of her former husband for his brother's country seat:—"The Hon. Lionel Wentworth *and family* for Wentworth Park." How often did her eyes peruse and re-peruse that sentence, and fancy that it contained intelligence of the *life*, at least, of her little one!

Once only she obtained fuller information, though from the same common-place source.

As her glance wandered over the columns of the Gazette, she was struck by a passage headed "Miraculous Escape." The names were familiar to her: with a flushed cheek and beating heart she read the brief account of "an accident which had nearly proved fatal to the son of the Hon. Lionel Wentworth, a promising child, aged three years." The nurse was lifting him on the rails of the balcony to see a cavalcade of gentlemen on horseback, when he suddenly slipped from her hold, and fell on the pavement below. It was at first supposed that he was killed, but, on examination, he was found to have escaped without even a bruise! In the agony of her feelings, Madeline wrote to Mr. Wentworth, beseeching of him to write but a single line, or even commission another

to tell her whether the report in the newspaper were true, and whether the child had suffered any injury.

To this appeal no answer was returned; and the next certain intelligence that reached her was the account of the marriage of Mr. Wentworth with a Mrs. Pole, a widow, whose restless spirit and love of meddling had, as Madeline well remembered, been the cause of much and serious discomfort in her home. Her boy—her gentle and lovely little Frank, was now under the controul, and dependent on the caprice of a stepmother! This was an unexpected blow. Mr. Wentworth was no longer young when she herself had been induced to accept him, and she had never anticipated having a successor. The event would perhaps have made a stronger impression upon her, but

for one which overwhelmed her with anguish, and occupied every feeling: Henry Marchmont broke a blood-vessel.

No paroxysm of passion—no previous illness—no excessive exertion—gave any apparent cause for this terrible and sudden catastrophe. Mr. Marchmont's friends vainly inquired of each other "how Henry had contrived to bring on this attack?" Those appealed to shook their heads—some attributed it to anxiety of mind—some to natural delicacy of constitution all that was certain was that he *had* burst a blood-vessel and that he was to die.

He was to die! the graceful gifted being, with whom, in the blindness of human hope, she had looked forward to a life of tranquil comfort—of devoted love;—for whom, in the blindness of human passion, she had deserted

the ties that first bound her, and the station to which she belonged. How often had they vowed that years should pass away and find them unchanged towards each other—how often had they talked over the decline of their days, spent in retirement and cheerful affection;—and Henry had grown eager as he spoke of a residence in England, when, as Lady Marchmont, she would be enabled to occupy herself in acts of charity and kindness to the poor on his estate; and, forgotten by the great, feel, that sinner as she was, her name was announced by many an humble lip in their evening prayers.

Those hopes were over. The decree had gone forth which none could reverse. The heart whose love had so planned and parcelled out her future, was to lie chilled and senseless in the grave ere a few more brief months com-

pleted the seventh year of their union; and Madeline was to be left alone! Oh, never knelt enthusiast or saint before heaven with a soul full of more agonised fervour than the wretched wife of Henry Marchmont:—she prayed—not as they pray who have been taught to murmur words of supplication as a duty, and repeat them with scarcely a faint consciousness of their need of the blessings solicited. Her prayer was such as burst from the fasting David's lips when the child of his sin was taken from him—wild—earnest—spoken with pale and quivering lips—with swollen and streaming eyes—and such it well might be, for she prayed for *his* life!

It was at the dawn of a bright warm day, at a beautiful villa near Nice, and Madeline had just returned to her husband's room, which she

had only quitted to bathe and dress after the long night's weary watch. He called her in a more animated tone than usual: and she bent over him with sorrowful affection. "Madeline," said he, "this is our wedding-day." Madeline started; it was the first of those loved anniversaries which had not been foreseen by both—and for which they had not provided some trifling token of mutual regard: the tears rose to her eyes. "You shall do me a service;" said her husband; "you want air—it will give you strength—strength to sit by me—(you see what a selfish fellow I am); take the children, and go into the little pony chaise and buy me an inkstand; I want to write a long letter: and an inkstand shall be your gift for to-day." She obeyed, though her heart trembled at leaving him even for an hour; she dared not contradict

his whim even by requesting permission to stay.

She wept as she besought his servant not to quit the ante-room during her absence; and the man wondered why she should be more anxious and depressed on that day than on any other. She wept as she entered the nursery, and bid her little boy and girl prepare to accompany her; and the children wondered she could feel sad on such a bright and beautiful morning; she wept, as in an almost inarticulate voice she desired the *bijoutier* to produce the prettiest of the articles she was commissioned to purchase; and the curiosity and surprise visible in the man's countenance reminded her of the necessity of appearing composed. *She* had no mother—no sister—no virtuous and sympathising friend, to whom she could unburthen her grief; to

whom she could say ; “ It may be the last gift I shall ever present to Henry—the last 10th of October I shall ever spend in his company ! ”

She hurried home and stole to her husband's apartment. He was sleeping on the sofa by the little reading table : a letter, folded but not directed, lay by him ; and the materials for writing were scattered on the table. She inquired of the servant and learnt that, after writing the letter, Marchmont had rung for a taper and some sealing wax, but that when the man returned with them his master had sunk back in a deep sleep, from which he had taken care not to disturb him. Madeline sighed, and again sought her husband's dressing-room. One hour—two—three past away and still that sleeping head preserved its position ; and still, with a statue-like quiet, the unhappy woman kept

watch by his side. At length a feverish start on the part of the sick man roused her: the shadowy blue eyes opened and gazed kindly upon her, and a broken sigh indicated that he was awake and conscious.

“Henry, love, here is your inkstand; how are you?” murmured Madeline in a low voice. She smiled, too, as she said it; the fitful struggling smile which bears so close a resemblance to sunshine on an April day. But the dying man did not reply, eagerly and wildly he gazed at her, and then seizing the letter, he directed it, “To Sir Henry Marchmont, Bart.” A few hours closed the scene.

The sun that rose the morning after that wedding-day, saw Madeline Marchmont a heart-broken lonely widow, and the gazette which contained the announcement of her husband’s

death, also told of the birth of twin-sons, born to the Hon. Lionel Wentworth by the former Mrs. Pole. In his will Henry Marchmont left his wife sole guardian of his two children; sole inheritor of his property; but he expressed a wish that in the event of his uncle's offering any advice on the disposal of the former, that Mrs. Marchmont should endeavour to comply: that his boy should be educated in England; and that the letter he was then intending to write to Sir Henry should be forwarded immediately after his death. His desire was duly obeyed, and his uncle read as follows:—

MY DEAR UNCLE,

From my earliest boyhood to the day I left England I can recal nothing on your part but kindness and generosity: to that kind-

ness, to that generosity, a dying man makes his last appeal. I leave one behind me, (God comfort her!) more desolate than ever is the lot of woman under such circumstances. I leave her alone—unprotected—and that one thought is all that embitters my last moments. I know what you thought, what you said at the time she left Mr. Wentworth. I do not defend our mutual sin (though I believe and hope there will be mercy for both), but I *do* intreat of you to believe that hers is not a vicious mind; I *do* implore of you to receive her, not as the divorced Mrs. Wentworth, but as my fond, true, and patient wife; as one who watched me in sickness and cherished me in health; as the devoted mother of my innocent children. In this hope I die—die without seeing again the home, or the friends, of old days: and my last words are

—do not, oh ! do not cast *her* off, for the sake
of the nephew who played round your knees
when a child, who now, for the last time, languidly and painfully signs himself,

Your affectionate

HENRY MARCHMONT.

CHAPTER II.

THE news of Henry Marchmont's death arrived at the same time as the foregoing letter. The old man to whom it was addressed crushed it between his hands and groaned aloud. He had, then, outlived his heir—his handsome, high-spirited nephew was no more! such an event seemed more like a dream than reality; and he was forced to read the intelligence again and again before he could persuade himself of its

truth; and again, and again as he read it did exclamations of sorrow burst from his lips, mingled with many a vow of protection and assistance to those whom Henry had left behind him.

Again was Madeline spared the common addition to a sorrow like hers. Where another might have met with scorn and silence she found warmth and welcome. A kindly and condoling letter reached her by the first post, offering a residence at Marchmont Park to herself and the children as long as would be convenient to her. There was indeed one sentence in it which cut her to the heart—a vague, slight, but evidently anxious allusion to the possibility of her hereafter forming other ties, and a hope that, *if* she remained abroad, she would suffer the children occasionally to

visit one who would always be a father to them.

Rich, still young, and still most beautiful, it was perhaps natural that the thought of her marrying again should strike Sir Henry Marchmont's mind, and that the loneliness of his old age should make him anxious to secure the affection and society of those whom years might perhaps estrange entirely from their unknown relation. Madeline was not long deciding. At Marchmont Park, the scene of so many visions which now might never be realised, she felt she *could* not live; but she felt, also, that for her children's sake it would be most unwise to receive with coldness the late and long-delayed offer of reconciliation and kindness from her beloved Henry's uncle. She wrote humbly, gratefully, and after expressing her own intention of remain-

ing abroad till her daughter's education should be completed, she told him that her boy should be sent immediately to England; that it was her wish he should be placed at Eton; but that in all plans for his future welfare, she would be guided entirely by Sir Henry's opinion; and desired that her little Frederick's holidays might be spent with him.

With tears and blessings Frederick was accordingly confided to the care of an English officer, who was returning to England after burying an only daughter in the spot where they had promised him that health should again bloom on her cheek and sparkle in her eye; and with tears and blessings he was received into the new home that was prepared for him: and, too young for school, remained the plaything and idol of his grand uncle, the

old housekeeper, and a circle of tenants and dependents who seemed to have no other theme for praise, or object for flattery.

At length Madeline Marchmont wrote to the old baronet, expressing her intention of revisiting England, as he had repeatedly pressed her during the last two or three years, anxious, as he said, to give Gertrude, her daughter, of whose beauty he had heard many rumours in spite of the retirement in which she lived, an opportunity of marrying in her native country. It was with many a sigh of sorrowful recollection, and dread of the new future opening upon her, that Mrs. Marchmont consented to undergo the trial of seeing her pretty Gertrude taken about by careless relations, or perhaps unnoticed and uninvited because of her mother's fault.

Gentle and irresolute, always oppressed with the consciousness of her early disgrace, and morbidly afraid of losing the affections of her children, Madeline had made the most weakly indulgent, and perhaps the most ill-judging, of parents, to a boy and girl who particularly required controul and discipline. Wild, proud, and ungovernable, was the beautiful little Frederick she sent to his grand uncle ten years since, and from whom she had only had two short visits, which served to show that he still was what she remembered him in infancy; and wild, proud, and ungovernable, was the handsome lad who sprang forward and bounded down the steps of Marchmont House to welcome her arrival and that of his sister. Gertrude was still more completely a spoilt child, for boys at school and lads at college

must find their level; and Henry had soon discovered that though heir to a baronetcy, and supplied profusely with pocket money, he was not the only great man in the world: but Gertrude, at sixteen, only felt that she was a beauty and her mother's idol.

A word of contradiction roused all the violence of her nature; and Sir Henry, as he gazed on the pale, meek face of his nephew's widow, would turn and wonder whether she were indeed the parent of the slight fairy-like being whose fits of passion half shocked, half amused him, as he watched her dark blue eye flash fire, and her delicate nostril dilate with rage.

As their situation became more clear to them, these young people became even more uncertain and irritable in their tempers.

Frederick felt the mortifications which from time to time even the flattered Gertrude had to endure, though neither gout nor fatigue prevented Sir Henry from escorting her himself to a ball or party, when he could find no chaperone sufficiently worthy in his eyes to take charge of her. The history of her mother's elopement was of course soon known to Gertrude Marchmont, and the knowledge embittered her feelings and removed the only barrier to the confidence that existed between the brother and sister; for Frederick had been taunted with his mother's frailty, while a boy at school.

The thoughtlessness and selfishness of youth were pre-eminently displayed by the two children of the unhappy Mrs. Marchmont. She had never had the courage to tell them

of her fault, nor even after she was aware they knew it, had she in any way recurred to it. She had never, when some angry word from Gertrude had cut her to the soul, said, "My heart is already breaking; do not afflict me further." Accustomed from the first to have something to conceal, she hid even her tears from them; and often, when the resemblance of Frederick to his father struck her more forcibly than usual, and thoughts how ill that father, who had never frowned upon her, would have brooked the angry looks and angry words she had to bear from his son, she would retire to the solitude of her own chamber and weep, and wish that she were laid beside him in the grave.

Gertrude, too; her pretty Gertrude! the days were past when the little fat white-

shouldered toddling thing came to be kissed and taken on her knee: her daughter was a woman now; an angry woman; and they stood together, the wronger and the wronged. So at least deemed the ill-governed offspring of Henry Marchmont: they felt their own mortification—their own disgrace; but no thought of *her* love, and *her* sorrow; no pity for her early widowhood—her lonely life—her devotion to themselves, to their father, crossed their minds; they felt angrily and coldly at times towards her, and took no pains to conceal those feelings.

Often was the timidly offered caress peevishly evaded by the daughter; and Madeline felt more desolate while seated with her two grown-up children, than when, stealing away unquestioned and unregretted, she wandered through

the beautiful avenues of Marchmont Park, dreaming of the love of her early youth, and the curly-headed smiling infants who then seemed such certain sources of pleasure and happiness.

At such times as these it is not to be supposed that she could forget one, of whom she had heard little, but for news of whom her restless spirit always pined—the one who had “first woke *the mother* in her heart”—her forsaken child! He lived—that she knew; but she longed to gaze upon him; unloved, unremembered as she must be, even by *him*, to trace the changes time had made in that sweet face, and hear the voice whose unforgotten tones could barely lisp the word mother, when she abandoned him.

On one of the very few occasions on which

Mrs. Marchmont could be persuaded to leave home when Sir Henry struggled through Gertrude's spring in London, they all proceeded together to the opera; Madeline was passionately fond of music, and there, where she could be herself unseen, unheard, she enjoyed having pointed out to her Gertrude's favourite partners, or rival beauties, and listening to the passionate melody of Pasta's voice.

The curtain had just fallen, and Mrs. Marchmont was taking a survey of the theatre, when she was struck by the countenance of a young man in one of the boxes immediately opposite—it was singularly, divinely handsome, though something effeminate and suffering in its expression made it perhaps less pleasant to gaze on than a common observer would have deemed. Such as it was, however, it riveted

the attention of Madeline, which Gertrude no sooner perceived, than she observed carelessly, "that young man has been watching you all the evening whenever you bent forward to see the opera."

Mrs. Marchmont started and shrunk back out of sight, nor did she change her position throughout the remainder of the performance.

As they hurried through the crowd in the round-room, Gertrude whispered to her brother, "There is Hugh Everton, Lord Everton's brother; I wish I could speak to him; it is so tiresome! I never can stay a moment in this room the nights Mamma goes to the opera."

Madeline overheard the whisper, and the tears rose to her eyes—it was very—*very* seldom—she accompanied her child to this single place of amusement. It had been a

pleasure to her, and she thought—she hoped, it was a pleasure to Gertrude. Alas! even these few evenings were grudged by the selfish object of her affection. She gently disengaged her arm from that of Frederick, and had the melancholy satisfaction of hearing Gertrude's silver laugh as she joined in young Hugh Everton's jests, and knowing that she had afforded her this unexpected pleasure by leaving the brother and sister unencumbered by the mother's presence. She stood alone, miserable, shrinking, awaiting the return of Sir Henry, who was receiving from his servant the agreeable intelligence, that one of the horses appeared too ill to take them home.

She was close to the doorway, and leaned against it to avoid the pressure of the crowd, and as the subsiding tears allowed her again to

see distinctly the objects round her, she was struck by perceiving the identical face, whose beauty had fascinated her in the boxes, opposite the place where she was standing. He was still regarding her intently, and in the mood in which Gertrude's whisper had thrown her, she thought there was insult in this obstinate notice. She returned a haughty and angry look in answer to his air of scrutiny, and moved forward to take Sir Henry's arm, who just then appeared. The young man turned very pale, as if seized with sudden faintness, and placing his hand on the rails of the stairs, he descended them on the opposite side to that she took with her uncle. It was then for the first time she perceived the young stranger was lame; and his feeble but not ungraceful figure roused again in her heart the same strange mixture of

interest and pain, which she had felt in the previous part of the evening.

As they severally prepared to retire after their return home, Madeline could not resist the curiosity which prompted her to inquire of her son the name of the young man, who had so pertinaciously watched her. Frederick “did not know, but could easily find out,” and wishing her the usual good night, left the apartment.

Gertrude followed him, and Madeline was preparing to accompany her, when old Sir Henry, laying his hand on her arm, said: “Is it possible, my dear Mrs. Marchmont, that you are not aware, that you do not know——.”

He paused, for the sick thrill that drove the blood from Madeline’s heart left her cheek ashy pale. “Is it he?” gasped she inarticulately.

“It is Mr. Wentworth,” said the Baronet, sorrowfully, for he hated to hear even the name of Madeline’s former husband.

“Holy Heaven!” murmured Mrs. Marchmont as she sank on a chair; “but that lameness?—my boy is a cripple—a complete cripple.”

“I believe it was a fall,” said Sir Henry. And Madeline remembered the “miraculous escape” of the newspapers, which had so agonised her at the time. The next morning a note was brought her. It ran as follows:—

“Mother! I saw you last night, and you saw *me*, though you treated me as a stranger. But that was in public—you shrank from me—you frowned on me before others, while you were with your other children, while strangers watched you; but alone, mother, *alone*, would

you spurn the child of your youth? I have never forgotten you. I *think* I should have known your face, though so pale last night. I am *sure* I should have known your voice; it has haunted me from my infancy till now, and no other has ever sounded so sweet to *me*. Oh! mother, see me! I am a weak, low-spirited creature; but I feel as if it would give me a new soul to feel conscious that there was one human being that really loved me. My father has never loved me—my step-mother grudges the place I hold as something her children are cheated of; and the love which others *win*, will never be bestowed on a deformed cripple. I am alone in the world—comfort me—comfort me, mother. I do not expect you to love me as well as those (blessed and happy children!) who have spent their

lives with you ; but something—*something* you will grant me, for the memory of the days when I was your only one. Write to me—tell me I may see you, and when and how, and let me hear your voice once more.”

Madeline read the note and laughed hysterically. The bitter words and scornful speeches of Frederick and Gertrude rose in contrast to her memory. The day she left her home seemed but as yesterday, and once again her lips burst forth with passionate sorrow—“ My child !—my forsaken child ! ”

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Madeline recovered from the first bewildered burst of grief, which had followed her reception of Frank Wentworth's note, she sat down to reply to it with mingled feelings of bitterness and joy. "There is then," thought she, "*one* in the wide world who pines for my love as I have pined for theirs; who feels for my sorrow without scorning my sin. Child of my early youth, it is to you I

am to look for the consolation of my age!" She would have given worlds to have been certain of the sympathy of a human being, and to that being she would have flown to impart the triumphant news that her lost boy, her own beautiful Frank, had written her those lines of mournful and passionate affection, and was coming to see her; but the habit of repressing every expression of feeling was strong. Her pretty Gertude's light foot-step glided through the two drawing-rooms to her boudoir, before she was aware of her approach, but when she did become conscious of her presence, she only replied slightly in the affirmative to a question as to whether Frederick and his sister might ride together at their usual hour; and adding, "I have some notes to write," bent her head again over the table.

“Mamma is looking very well to-day, Fred.,” said Gertrude, as they bent their way towards the park; “she must have been very beautiful when she was young.” Alas! it was the lack of *hope*, that youth of the heart, and strengthener of the frame, which caused Madeline’s cheek to be already faded, and her glossy tresses to be mingled with grey; and it was the flush of hope which brought light to her eye and smiles to her lip, as she looked up and answered her daughter’s question, while Frank Wentworth’s note lay beneath her pausing hand.

With a beating heart and a hurrying pen, Madeline traced the following lines:—

“Now and always, my beloved boy, come to me at the same hours, from three till five: I am then certain to be *alone*. Come, for my heart

is fainting within me till I press you to it; and my breath seems choked when I remember last night. Come quickly—come as soon as you get this.

“YOUR MOTHER.”

And when she had sealed and sent her own, she read again *his* note, every syllable of which was already graven on her heart, and as her tearful eye dwelt on each word, it seemed as though there were a peculiar and unutterable grace in all; even the way in which he signed his name appeared different from what another might have done. FRANK WENTWORTH—oh, how many weeping kisses did she press on the unconscious paper where his hand had traced this loved, this unforgotten name! She was still gazing on the note when a light, hurried, uneven step was heard on the stairs; her

breathing became choked and heavy ; her limbs trembled ; the door was flung open, and with a suppressed and convulsive shriek she sprang forward and fell fainting at the feet of him whose form her stiffening arms had vainly sought to embrace.

“ Mother ! sweet mother ! ” How musical was the voice which fell on her ear ; how radiant the eyes which gazed anxiously into hers as she woke from that swoon to the consciousness that her son, her long-lost idolised boy, was near her, was supporting her, was blessing her with his lips and from his heart ! “ I called no one, mother ; I thought you would not wish it ; I could not have borne that any one should have aided you besides myself ; lay your head back again on my shoulder till you are well.”

“ I *am* well, my boy,” murmured Madeline faintly ; but her head sank again to its resting place.

There was a pause ; the thoughts of each roamed through past years. “ Oh ! mother ! ” exclaimed Frank Wentworth suddenly, “ how long ago—and yet how like yesterday it seems—that first dark lonely day after I lost you ? ”

With the sobbing grief of a little child, he rose and flung himself into her arms as he spoke, and Madeline pressed his head to her bosom, even as she had often done to still his cries in those by-gone years ; and repeated mechanically the same words she had been wont *then* to use, in the same soothing tone, “ Hush, Frank, hush, my own lovely boy ! ” with a bewildered and dreaming consciousness in which all was forgotten and confused, except

that she was his mother, that he was her child. And the voice and the words that had consoled Frank's infantine sorrows sank to his heart. He looked up, and they both laughed hysterically at their forgetfulness of the lapse of years; and then they wept again. And there was sorrow mingled with their laughter, and joy struggling with their tears.

For some time after this first meeting Frank Wentworth continued to visit his mother daily, at those hours when, as she herself had expressed it, she was sure to be *alone*; when Gertrude and Frederick rode or walked together, and the old baronet was talking politics in White's bay-window. Madeline's shrinking and timid disposition and acquired reserve made her instinctively dread broaching the subject of her son's visits; and some feeling,

half unexplained in the depths of her heart, told her that he would not be welcomed by the haughty Frederick or the cold selfish Gertrude as *she* had welcomed him.

Nevertheless the thirst of affection made her crave for more of his society, and now and then, in her happier moments, when he was with her, and all the charm of his wit, his beauty, gentle gaiety, wound round her mother's heart, she would picture to herself long happy evenings with all three of her children in friendly intercourse, and perhaps the devotion of one impressing the others with a sense of their own negligent or rebellious conduct towards her.

Still she would never have had courage to propose a meeting, had it not been that Frank Wentworth himself one day talked of it as of a natural step. They had been speaking of

the future, and Frank had been repeating over and over again his little arrangements, of which the principal feature was that, as soon as Gertrude was married (which, with her beauty, accomplishments, and fortune, was a thing to be soon expected), his mother should come and live with him, when he interrupted himself by saying, half gaily, half tenderly, “and, by thy by, am I never to know Gertrude or Frederick? I should like so to be with them; to talk to them; I should love your other children so much, dear mother, now that I know you have love to spare for *me*! Madeline sighed; she had never hinted that the love she had poured out for years was as water spilled on the sand; that her lonely affection was unreturned; and that carelessness, bordering on insult, was the

general conduct of those he desired so ardently to know as her children ; but she promised him that they should all meet, and the remembrance that it was *his* wish, that it was a promise made to *him*, carried her through a task she would otherwise have shrunk from.

She chose one evening (such evenings were rare) when Gertrude had neither ball, opera, assembly, nor play to take her from home ; but was seated quietly near her, occupied with a piece of beautiful embroidery. A long silence was broken by a yawn from Frederick, who rose from his chair, and flinging down the book he had been reading, which he pronounced the dullest in the world, walked towards the door.

“ Are you going out, Frederick ? ” asked Madeline. “ Yes, mother.”

“ Could you spare me half an hour before you go ? ” added she in a tremulous tone. “ Certainly.”

And he resumed his seat, and after waiting a few moments, as if expecting she would again address him, he also resumed his book. There was another long pause, during which Madeline stedfastly contemplated the graceful figure of her daughter, as her white and taper fingers wandered among blue, crimson, and white silks in a basket by her side. “ What pretty shades you are working that screen in,” said she, with a heavy sigh, which would have told many a more anxious and more affectionate child that her thoughts were not with her words ; but Gertrude only replied with a pleased smile.

“ Yes, I have got all your favourite carpet

colours, I am working it for the little boudoir; your cheek gets so flushed by the fire there, I think it must be quite uncomfortable."

Slight as this attention was, it gave something like hope and courage to the fainting heart of the disgraced mother. "Thank you, Gertrude, thank you, dear girl; you have spent many hours of your time upon it, and I shall value it very much. Do you happen to recollect," continued she, hurriedly, as though it were part of the same subject; "do you happen to recollect a young man at the opera one night, who——"

"Yes, mamma," interrupted Gertrude, without raising her eyes.

"Do you know who he was?" gasped the unhappy woman, as the tears, long choked back by effort, gushed from her eyelids. Gertrude

threw down the silk, and took her mother's hand.

“ Yes, mamma, yes, dear mamma, don't distress yourself; I know; Frederick told me the next morning. He asked——”

“ Children, children,” sobbed Madeline, “ *I* knew it, also, the next day; and that day, and all succeeding ones, have brought my poor Frank to see me—and—and my earnest wish—my prayer—is to see you altogether—my *prayer*, children—!” and she sank on her knees before them, for, as she spoke of Frank Wentworth's visits, a deep and angry flush had mantled in Gertrude's cheek, and she withdrew the hand which had clasped her mother's.

Worse tempered, but warmer-hearted, Frederick started from the chair, where he had remained hitherto, motionless with surprise;

and hastily throwing his arms round his mother's neck, he exclaimed, "Of course mother, could you doubt his being welcome?—don't sob so, I'll fetch him myself; I see him often at the club. Pray compose yourself;—he's welcome—is he *not* welcome, Gertrude?" And Gertrude sank back in her chair and gave way to a violent burst of tears—tears of mingled selfishness and agitation. The fact of Frank Wentworth's visits flashed information to *her* mind that certainly did not add to its peace.

Her dearest wish was to marry young Lord Everton, who she knew was in love with her, and whose proposals she firmly believed to be delayed or prevented by the unhappy circumstances of her mother's misconduct. That Mr. Wentworth should visit every day at Madeline Marchmont's house, might be gratifying to the

two parties most deeply concerned, but to Gertrude brought only vague reflections on the increased publicity of their disgrace by this mingling of the two families; and she figured some one asking, “*Why* young Wentworth went so constantly there,” (for so retired had Madeline lived that there were some to whom her story—nay, her existence were unknown); and the reply, “Why, don’t you know Mrs. Marchmont is his mother?” and then the details of that elopement twenty years ago; and blame, and scorn, and coldness, and insult to all, for the sake of one: and Everton’s haughty mother lecturing her son to shun the snares spread for him by the daughter of a *divorcée*.

Again: Gertrude had remarked of late, that her mother had ceased to be so much grieved at any wayward action, or angry speech; had

ceased even to be so very anxious to soothe and coax her spoiled child, when she had met with mortification, or what she considered such: now, now she saw the cause: her mother's heart had found another occupation—a haven of love wherein to shelter herself when the storm rose—a son to welcome her when the daughter frowned—and to him she had, doubtless, turned in all those moments of transient disgust with which the young Gertrude visited her sinning parent.

Gertrude had been accustomed to be her mother's idol, and though she did not love that mother as in her childhood, she yet felt a vague jealousy of one who, apparently, was to take her place as *first object* in that wrung and broken heart. It was a mixture of all these considerations, combined with the sight of such distress, as acts *mechanically* on all who have human

feelings, that caused the beautiful daughter of Henry Marchmont to burst into tears; a flash of lightning thought for *herself*, with involuntary pity for her weeping mother. Alas! with Gertrude, *self* was always predominant.

She was still occupied with these thoughts when Frank Wentworth's well-known step greeted her mother's ear. Frederick stood forward: he was roused and excited: and always the creature of impulse, he determined to do his best to give Mrs. Marchmont the momentary gratification of seeing her unhappy son greeted kindly. "Frank," said he, reddening, as he extended his hand, "*we* ought to need no introduction. Gertrude!" and Gertrude rose and shook hands with the young stranger, and they all sat down as though they had been one family.

CHAPTER IV.

WOE for that day ! woe for the attempt to bind together, in that strange and unnatural alliance, the children of her who had broken her first natural ties. Woe for the home where, in the credulous sweetness of his gentle disposition, Frank Wentworth thought to live as a brother with the offspring of the man who had tempted his mother from her home. Woe ! to her—to him—to all !

“Gertrude,” said Frederick to his sister, the day after this scene, “I think young Wentworth is very handsome,”

“Handsome, Fred.? what, with that leg ! why he is deformed.”

“No, Ger., nonsense : he is only lame, and his head is beautiful.”

“Yes, like the old fashioned pictures of the serpent with a cherub’s face, in the garden of Eden; and though heaven knows *ours* was no Eden, even before he came, yet now—” and Gertrude, with many a sigh and some tears, explained all that she felt, and thought, and feared, and conjectured, till a dark veil seemed to fall before young Frederick’s eyes and change Frank Wentworth to a demon.

Unwitting of all these secret prejudices ;

anxious to make them fond and proud of their new companion, and full of admiration for the beauty which he inherited in common with her other children, and the talents in which he far surpassed them ; fascinated by his gentleness and devotion to herself, Madeline Marchmont blindly pursued a path which led only to further misery. She would sit closeted in the little boudoir with Frank for hours ; careless how time flew ; careless where others spent that time. When they were assembled together, she would defend his opinions with vehemence, if contradicted, or smile with the proudest admiration when they seemed to listen in silence. She did not scruple at length openly in her reproaches (and even her reproaches were less gentle now that a new hope had given life to her heart,) to institute a

comparison between her younger children and the pledge of early days. Frank would not have so conducted himself—she could still turn to Frank ; and Gertrude and Frederick grew to hate even the sound of his name, and to shun him as they would have done a serpent.

The first symptom of their dislike, which struck on the startled mind of their unhappy mother, was on the occasion of some slight dispute, in the course of which Frank Wentworth contradicted Frederick Marchmont with some warmth. Frederick answered passionately, as was his custom ; and Frank, holding out his hand, exclaimed, “ Well, well, Fred., I *may* be wrong ; don’t be angry.”

“ I am not angry, Mr. Wentworth,” coldly and haughtily replied the offended young man, and so saying he left the apartment. Gertrude

watched the door as it closed—rose irresolutely—sat down again—rose, and prepared to leave the room.

“Do not leave us, Gertrude!” said her mother.

“I do not choose that Frederick should spend his evenings alone *now*, more than *formerly*,” muttered the spoiled beauty; and her haughty eyes flashed indignantly on Frank as she emphatically pronounced the last word.

She disappeared from their presence, and Madeline wept on the bosom of her forsaken child.

“It is a pity you ever left Frank, if you are so much fonder of him than of us,” was Gertrude’s reply to the gentle expostulation which Mrs. Marchmont ventured to make.

“Would that I had died in my cradle, or

never been born, rather than live to see this creeping effeminate loungee make our house his home," was Frederick's spontaneous observation.

Once kindled, the torch of discord burned with a quenchless flame ; and if the children of Henry Marchmont disliked and envied their mother's eldest son, that son was not slow, in spite of his gentleness of feeling and manner, to resent the want of respect and affection shown to her who, in his eyes, was all perfect. Bitter words were exchanged, and once exchanged were often repeated. To a stranger it would have appeared that two opposing parties were formed in the house ; Henry Marchmont's children on the one side, and Henry Marchmont's widow and Lionel Wentworth's son on the other.

One evening of that eventful autumn, Ger-

trude entered the drawing-room, where Frederick was already seated; her cheek crimson with rage and shame, and her eyes swoln with weeping.

“I knew it,” exclaimed she, “I knew it,” and setting her teeth hard, she flung down a letter, or rather the copy of a letter, from Lady Everton to a friend, in which the former commented with the most unsparing contempt on the conduct of unhappy Madeline—sneered at the terms on which Frank Wentworth visited at the house—lamented her son, Lord Everton’s, infatuated blindness, and finally expressed a determination to use *any* means to prevent his disgracing himself by the connection.

“How did you come by this?” was Frederick’s first question.

“It was sent anonymously,” replied Ger-

trude, “with a few lines purporting to be from ‘a true friend,’ and asserting their belief that I might, if I pleased, marry Everton to-morrow, without Lady E.’s consent being asked or granted. Whether this be true or not,” continued she, impatiently waving her hand, as she saw her brother again about to speak—“whether such a letter was ever sent or not, scarcely signifies: it is enough that others dare write what I have scarcely dared to think; and let the letter come from a friend who would warn, or an enemy who would mortify, it has equally decided my mind. I will write to Everton to bid him farewell, and I will cease to mingle in society, since its members are so anxious to visit on my head the follies of my mother. My destiny is ruined for her sin.”

During the delivery of the last sentence,

Gertrude had one more auditor than she counted upon. Frank Wentworth stood before her, his face deadly pale, his wild and radiant eyes fixed full on her face, and his whole frame shaking with emotion, "Gertrude Marchmont," exclaimed he, "the words you have spoken are disgraceful alike to the names of *woman* and *daughter*. Oh ! who shall speak kindly of my mother's fault since her own child can so bitterly condemn her ? May you never be tempted—or rather," gasped he, and he laid his hand heavily on her arm as he spoke, "or rather *may* you be tempted ; and then—then, when false reasoning is poured into your ear, and false hopes glitter before your mind, may *you* fall—as *she* did."

He flung the hand he grasped from him, while Gertrude shrieked in mingled terror and pain ; and at the same instant a blow aimed full

at his breast by the desperate and muscular arm of Frederick Marchmont stretched him prostrate on the ground.

Madeline heard enough as she advanced from her boudoir to madden her with alarm ; she rushed forward, and wringing her hands, exclaimed, “ Desist, children, desist ! oh, my God, remember you are *brothers* ! ”

“ Brothers ! ” shouted Frederick, while the veins on his temple started with rage ; “ woman, this is your own work—*tell Everton we are BROTHERS !* ”

“ Hush, Frederick,” murmured his sister, “ she does not hear you ; ” and the terrified and remorseful girl knelt down by Frank Wentworth, and passed her arm under his head, while she looked anxiously up in her mother’s face.

That mother heeded not her silent appeal.

Pale and statue-like, Madeline stood—her dilated eyes wandering slowly from the face of her eldest-born, the feeble, crippled child of her youth, to the folded arms and haughty form of the child of her sin. Into *his* face she *dared* not look, but ever and anon her pale lips parted with a strange ghastly smile, and the word “*Cain*” broke from them. Frederick heard and started; he bent eagerly for a moment above young Wentworth, and a shuddering sigh from the lips of the latter reassured his heart; his wide blue eyes opened and met Gertrude’s face of horror and anxiety, and he murmured, as they again momentarily closed, “I was stunned—only stunned.” And Madeline—did the sound of her favourite’s voice recal her to herself? It did; but she knelt not by his side; she aided him not to rise! a fear worse than death had

taken possession of her mind, and flinging herself into Frederick's arms, she exclaimed hysterically, "Oh, Frederick—oh, my son, thank God you are not a murderer!"

Alas, it needed not violence to snap the thread of that fragile life. The reconciliation which followed this fearful scene, never brought Frank Wentworth again to that stranger-home; a brain fever attacked him, and in the ravings of his delirium he called incessantly on one whose form he vainly fancied sat patiently watching at the foot of his bed, thanking her for her tenderness and adjuring her to bear with resignation his death. Madeline heard of his illness, and once more she appealed to the husband she had deserted, for permission to have news of her child, for leave to see him die. Perhaps if Lionel Wentworth had read her passionate and

broken-hearted note he might have melted, but he had vowed never to open a letter directed in that hand, and even in that hour—that hour of sorrow which both were doomed to share—he flung it with gloomy resentment into the flames. Madeline had a last resource—she wrote to *his wife*.—"You are a mother—let me see my boy!"

"Frank," said the wretched woman to her dying son, "is there any message, any token you wish to leave; can I do nothing for you? Now that you are collected, if there is any one you have loved—*any one* Frank—oh! let me cling to something that has belonged to you. Have you never loved, idol of my breaking heart?"

Frank Wentworth took his mother's hand, and a sweet smile hovered round his lips, a smile of

love so holy and intense, that, as his failing hand pressed hers to his bosom, she felt that *her* image only had found a place there.

It was over ; and with the calm of despair Madeline passed through the long passage of what *had* been her home. She paused at the nursery door, not that she wished to linger, but because her limbs refused to do their office further ; lights and voices were within, and she heard the news of Frank's death announced, and the nurse of Mrs. Pole's children exclaim, " Bless my soul, ma'am, and Mr. Lionel will be my lord after all !" She heard the " hush, hush, Ellis," of the mother who stood in *her* nursery, and the eager kisses which were showered on the boy who stood in her son's place. She heard, and walked on.

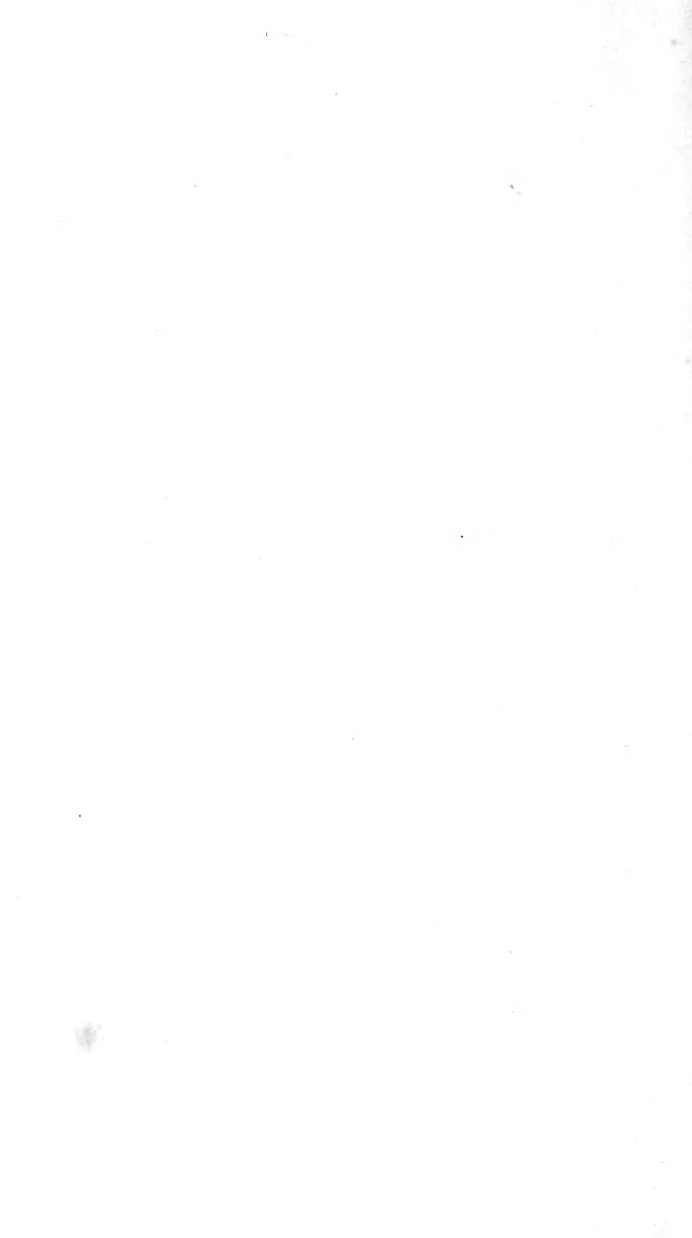
Into the home which was *now* hers Madeline

Marchmont entered, and as her noiseless step glided into her own drawing-room she was again doomed involuntarily to hear what smote her to the heart. It was Lord Everton's last sentence to the weeping Gertrude. His was a frank and cheerful voice, and his manner had a mixture of tenderness and firmness. "I would not be thought harsh and unjust hereafter," said he, "and therefore, dear girl, I tell it you *now*, however painful the subject may be. I do not say you shall *never* see your poor mother, but it must be at very rare intervals—very rare, Gertrude. You consent, my beloved girl?" And Madeline heard Henry Marchmont's daughter murmur her assent to the proposal; and her obedience to the law laid down of rarely seeing the widowed and disgraced parent, who had watched over her in sickness—worshipped her

in health—nestled her to her nursing bosom when an infant—and borne meekly, *too* meekly with her faults as a girl. Did the cradle song of that mother never rise to her memory when she too became a mother in her turn ?

But it is not our intention to pursue this tale further : what Gertrude's fate as a wife might be is shrouded in darkness ; this much alone we know and tell, that during the little remnant of her days, Madeline Marchmont met with more kindness and forbearance from both than they had hitherto shown. Perhaps they felt for her when the thought struck them that she could no longer turn from *THEM* to her Forsaken Child !

ON READING AN OLD LETTER.



ON READING AN OLD LETTER.

OH what gloomy shadows
Steal across my soul,
As I view thy pages,
Long-forgotten scroll !
All the disappointments
Of a weary life ;
All the wild ambition,
All the bitter strife ;
All the gleams of pleasure,
Sickening into pain ;
All my youth's romances—
Round me rise again.

Now I feel how feeble
Is this nerveless arm,
And how slow thy pulses,
Heart, so wildly warm !
Strength, and hope, and gladness,
All have passed away—
And my soul is darkened,
And my locks are grey.
Young eyes weep for sorrow,
Mine are hot and dry ;
But I yield thee, token,
One long weary sigh !

Oh how sad and altered
Seems the world to me,
Since the joyous moment
Which gave birth to thee !
Now alone I wander
Through my father's halls,

Where each silent chamber

Many a dream recalls.

There, no welcome voices

Sound their carols sweet ;

There, I hear no echo,

Of quick busy feet.

Many a form lies sleeping,

Loved in days of yore ;

Many a face looks coldly,

Cared for now no more ;

Cheeks that met my glances

With a crimson glow,

Scarce my love remember,

'Tis so long ago !

And the eyes whose beaming

Like a sunrise burst,

Seem but ghosts of others,

Which I knew at first !

Heavier droop those eyelids,
Through succeeding years,
'Till death's silent shadow
Closes on their tears.

Yet to *me* more welcome
Is each faded face,
Than the joyous brightness
Of a younger race.

With those old companions,
I have wandered on,
And *their* hearts remember
All *my* heart hath known.

From amongst the youthful
We are fading fast ;
Theirs is all the future,
Ours is all the past.
Buried *there* are feelings
Kindness cannot wake ;

New friends only grieve me
For my old friends' sake ;
Ev'n the smile of Beauty
Wakens but a sigh,
For the long-remembered
Dreams of days gone by.

I sigh-for *thee*, my sister,
Whose sweet and winning voice,
Through long hours of sorrow
Taught me to rejoice;
For that voice I listen,
Many a night in vain,
While against my casement
Beats the driven rain ;
And sigh for thee—the fairest
Of a young happy band,
Long ago departed
To the better land.

Thou art gone, my brother !

Thou, whose earnest heart,

Long, and well, and truly,

Did a brother's part.

Thou, whose nature left me

Hope to lean upon,

When some lighter feeling's

Broken spell was gone.

When the loved proved fickle,

Or the friend betrayed :

Who shall heal the sorrow

Which *thy* loss hath made !

Oh ! my heart resembles,

As it wastes away,

Part of some lone ruin

Sinking to decay !

Tall and stately columns,

Graceful in their pride,

Were my father's children,
Standing side by side.
Scattered round about me,
One by one they fall ;
Why should I survive them.
Who was linked with all ?

Once again I read thee,
Scroll, so lightly penned ;
With a fond remembrance
O'er thy leaves I bend.
Jests which thou containest,
Still can make me smile,
Though *they* sleep who made them
In the vaulted aisle.
The *echo* of a reveller's shout
Is faint, and low, and sad ;
But this wan lip's smiling
Seems no longer glad.

THE FRIEND OF OUR EARLY DAYS.

I.

FAREWELL! a long farewell!

Friend of the days gone by:

My heart heaves now with a painful swell,

And the tears stand in mine eye;

For the sap in the green tree of life decays

When we part from the friend of our early days!

II.

Farewell ! the dark blue sea
Is stretching between us now ;
Strangers must tell thee news of me—
Unseen and unheard art thou.

Oh ! greet them kindly, for, blame or praise,
They bring news of the friend of early days !

III.

Farewell ! mine eyes must weep
When I think of thy parting words ;
And my harp shall a spirit of sadness keep
Enshrined in its trembling chords :

And breathe, in the midst of the merriest lays,
One sigh for the friend of early days !

IV.

Farewell ! our looks were changed,
Our words were cold and few :
But hearts which by force may be estranged,
By force are not made untrue.

To his lost home love wanders—and while life
decays,

Yearns still for the friend of early days !



THE FORSAKEN.

I.

I KNEW, I knew the end would come,
And thou hast willed, and we must part,
But, oh ! tho' banished from thy home
Thou canst not thrust me from thy heart.
No ; vainly wide with all its storms
Between us rolls the distant sea,
Though many a mile divide our forms,
Thy *soul* shall still be full of me !

II.

When the glad daylight shall arise
And wake to life thy troubled breast ;
Oh thou shalt miss the laughing eyes
That hung enamour'd o'er thy rest ;
When from the midnight blue and deep
The sad moon gleams o'er land and sea,
The night winds in their rushing sweep
Shall bring thee back the thought of me.

III.

And thou shalt shrink before my name,
And sigh to hear the lays I sung ;
And curse the lips that dare to blame
Her, whom thine own reproaches wrung.
Thy life is charm'd ! a weary spell
Shall haunt thy spirit day by day ;
And shadows in thy home shall dwell
Of scenes for ever past away.

IV.

Years—chilling years—shall slow glide by,
And find thee lonely, joyless, still ;
And forms *more* fair shall charm thine eye,
But have no power thy heart to fill.
Even while they pledge thee passion's vow,
The sudden pang that none may see,
Shall darken on thine altered brow,
Thou'lt answer *them*—but think of *me*.

V.

When languid sickness numbs each limb;
Fancy shall bring my stealing tread,
And weary eyes, with watching dim,
To visit thy forsaken bed.
Go, rove through every clime on earth,
And dream thy falsehood sets thee free ;
In joy, in pain, in love, or mirth,
I still will haunt thy memory.



THE LOST ELECTION.



THE LOST ELECTION.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING is more curious, and at the same time more melancholy, than the revolution which takes place in our minds when we first begin to reflect, as it were, independently, and without reference to the opinions and prejudices of those amongst whom we have been fostered and brought up. There is a period in every man's life, at which he seems to pause, and take a survey of the past and the

future—at which his head seems to clear, and his heart to expand—and at which, for the first time, he sees everything under a new light. We seem hitherto only to have dreamed, and now to awake; to awake to much of triumph and expectation—to more of mortification and sorrow; and let this period be early or late, according to the quick or slow development of differently constituted minds, the impression is alike to all, and resembles—not the slow dawning of the tardy day to one who has watched for its morning—but the broad and sudden burst of light on the eye of a startled sleeper.

I know not how others have felt with regard to this moral phenomenon—this first spreading of the soul's wings; but *I* look back with irrepressible regret to the days when I allowed

others to think and decide for me; when my revered tutor had not taken the form of "a quiz" in my eyes, nor my father that of a very stupid, prejudiced, and irritable old man; when my dear, *dear* old maiden aunts (whom I never again shall be able properly to appreciate) agreed "never to quarrel before the dear child, for fear of weakening their authority;" and spared *me*, their occasional visiter, the petty jealousies—the ludicrous bickerings—the bitter sayings—which they never would spare one another;—when my uncle, the admiral, was a hero, whose fame was beyond Nelson's, and our old gamekeeper a second Robin Hood.

Ah! happy days, once more who would not be a boy!

My awe of my father has long changed into

a determination to humour his prejudices, and bear with his occasional harshness, for the sake of his real kindness at other times ; my respect for my tutor into wonder at my past blindness ; my love for my maiden aunts into an instinctive shrinking from their society. I have long perceived the admiral to be the most drunken and common-place of “ excellent officers,” and only refrain from informing against the gamekeeper, on account of his goodnature to me when a boy. But these were household prejudices, trivial in themselves, though painful in their extinction. I had others, far dearer, because apparently more intangible—fine, lofty, though, I confess, exceedingly vague ideas about the glory of Britain ; the beauty of the white cliffs of Dover ; the superiority of our

navy; the blessing of trial by jury; the respect paid by foreign nations to

The flag that braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze ;

and the perfect representation of the English people, together with their born and natural right to choose their own representatives.

Some of these prejudices, or prepossessions, still exist, and long may they continue; for they were instilled by my mother, whose advice I still respect, for she never made a parade of her authority—whose opinions still seem wise, because she never affected wisdom; but there is one which has been unfortunately shaken. I may have been a very dull, or a very obstinate lad; but, for a very, very long time, I persisted in believing an election to be the most glorious display of eloquent patriotism on

the part of the candidates, and of disinterested and intelligent decisions on the part of the electors, that a man could have the good fortune to witness : and this even before the Reform Bill.

Alas ! that I should have seen with mine own eyes, and heard with mine own ears, in the election for the borough of M——, a complete contradiction of all the hoarded prejudices of my boyish days. It was early in December last, that my friend Welford called at our retired place, near the village of Haslemere, and astonished me by his utter incapability of thinking or speaking of any thing but “ the approaching contest ” between Francis Mordaunt, the poor descendant of a long line of papa and mamma Mordaunts, some of noble rank, and all of noble blood ; and Tower

Puggins, a most respectable gentleman in the mercantile line, who, if he could not be accused of being

The *tenth* transmitter of a foolish face,

handed down (involuntarily) a copy of some *ci-devant* Puggins, and “gave the world assurance of a man.”

Welford talked, argued, and stormed; he loved the race of Mordaunts—had seen the proposed candidate eating pap in his nurse’s arms—was a man of weight and influence in the borough for which the Hon. Francis was standing, and had exerted that influence to the utmost in his favour. My father asked him to take a glass of brandy and water after dinner. Silently he assented — silently he poured it out, and then angrily exclaimed,

“ Nothing but claret drunk, sir ! nothing but claret drunk ! Why Puggins’s committee have uncorked more claret in three weeks, than has been drunk in the borough for three years.”

“ Poor fellow ! ” said my father, looking stealthily in Welford’s face.

I added, interrogatively, “ It must be a great annoyance to Mrs. Welford, the noise and worry of an election ? ”

“ He’s a monied man, sir—a monied man—that’s what it is ! the people’s heads are turned ; but I have every hope of Mr. Mordaunt’s success—of his eventual success.”

My friend paused—my father dropped into his after-dinner doze. I sipped my brandy and water, and wondered at the interest people contrive to take in other people’s affairs. My

friend again broke silence; long and loud he talked. My father continued to sleep; I continued to sip. My head grew a little drowsy, and my intellects a little confused. I heard occasionally the words "Puggins—Mordaunt;" "Mordaunt—Puggins;" and visions of a boxing-match on Haslemere common, which I had lately witnessed, floated before my eyes; but the combatants were unaccountably represented by the candidates for M——.

I was roused by a strong and energetic pressure on my wrist; and an exclamation, in which "go" was the only audible word. "Go—go it!" shouted I to the imaginary boxers; and I woke to find Welford grasping my arm; his heart was full; his tumbler was empty; he was endeavouring to persuade me to accompany him to M——.

“ You have never seen anything of the sort,” argued he, “ and it is high time you should ; besides the presence of two or three gentlemen of the county among Mr. Mordaunt’s friends, will gratify him, and have, perhaps, a good effect on the townsmen. You may consider my home as your own, while you stay ; and my wife will try to make you comfortable ; *do go !* ”

Welford’s kindness—the brandy and water ; and the recollection of Mrs. W. with a complexion like a china rose, in a dark blue dress, so overcame me, that I nearly wept, as I returned the pressure of his “ iron hand ; ” and promised to depart with him the next day, if my father could spare me.

Late the next evening, we accordingly reached the scene of action. Through the dim December mist, I could only see that the

walls were covered with hand-bills; and the streets thronged with people, who, at another time, would have been quietly in bed, or smoking their pipes by their own fire-sides. Long after I had retired for the night the pattering feet of restless voters—the drunken songs—or still more disagreeable drunken brawls in the street—startled me into wakefulness. At last a voice said, “Macbeth shall sleep no more,” though not precisely in those words; but (as nearly as occasional hiccups would permit me to judge) in the following fragment:—

A tower of strength Tower Puggins shall be,
And shall kick up his heels at the henemy !
And when we gets *him* at the top of the poll,
Franky Mordaunt down in the mud may roll !
Tower Puggins is all that the 'art could desire ;
He's free—and he's ———

just as I was listening with the greatest attention for the expected list of Mr. Puggins's good qualities, a scuffle took place below my window, and the singer's voice descended to plain prose.

"You say—*Puggins for ever!* you varmint, you!"—"I woan't!" responded a yet more drunken voice, half choked by the pressure of the speaker's fingers on his throat.

"You woan't! I'll make you."

"You shaunt."

Another struggle—a fall—"Now you cry—*Puggins for ever!* you drunken beast."

"Murder!" growled the fallen hero. "Not murder; you needn't go for to cry that; cry, *Puggins for ever!*"

A rattling in the Mordauntian's throat made me fling up the window in time to hear him

struggle with a sentence, which sounded like

“Puckr-r-r-rugins-f-ever!”

“Get away from under my window!”—
shouted I.

“Who are you for?” was the sole answer.

“Get away, I tell you.”

“Are you for Puggins or Mordaunt?” screamed both assailants.

“I don’t care a curse for one or t’other,” said I, thoroughly exasperated; “get away, and let me go to sleep, or I’ll send for the police.” A handful of mud from the Pugginite, immediately followed by another from the Mordauntian, punished my rash confession; and much colder and damper than before I opened my window, I got into bed, to make a twentieth attempt at rest.

The morning was ushered in (if possible) with more confusion than the night had closed. I proceeded to the breakfast-room, and found my lovely Mrs. Welford looking as like a china rose as ever; and decorated with blue knots. The young ladies of the house ditto; and a Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt, cousins to the candidate for M——, also profusely adorned with the same colour. Mrs. Mordaunt was a middle aged, obstinate looking woman, and wore her blue, neither with the graceful gaiety of the girls, nor the smile between kindness and compliment of my admired rose. No; she seemed merely *determined* to wear what her maid called, *all that blue*, without reference to her own satisfaction, or that of others. She had a blue gown, a blue shawl, a blue bonnet,

and it is even affirmed she had blue stockings ! but, on so short an acquaintance, it was impossible for me to determine this point.

There was a restless expression in her small and quick brown eye, which made me somehow conjecture that she thought it possible they might all look "very blue" before night, independent of their colours. I glanced from her to Welford ; and on his brow also I spied something which made me feel insecure. I knew him to be as clever and clear-headed in judgment as he was eager and warm in his efforts for his friends.

"Has any thing gone wrong?" whispered I.

"Not positively," answered he ; "but six of our voters have found they have business at Portsmouth."

"Dear, how unlucky !" exclaimed I ; "busi-

ness at Portsmouth? but could they not put it off for a couple of days?"

"Put it off," said Mrs. Mordaunt, contemptuously, "they are gone in two postchaises from *the Rose and Laurel!*" I remained for an hour ignorant of the meaning of the emphasis laid on the last words. At the expiration of that time, I discovered that, "the Rose and Laurel," was Tower Puggins's *house*; his house of entertainment for man and beast (*i. e.* for man sober and man drunk); and the place where his horses and grooms put up. I understood—I saw—I comprehended—and not being accustomed to the feelings and opinions of Mr. Francis Mordaunt, I expressed to him my ardent desire that he could persuade six Pugginites to start for Portsmouth from the *Mordaunt Arms*, which was *our* house.

“Sir,” said the indignant candidate, “I had rather lose three elections.”

I thought him unwarrantably touchy—so I said no more.

At this moment the door opened, and a very lovely, timid looking person appeared, whom I discovered in a moment, by the universal eagerness with which she was greeted, to be the candidate's bride. Her hair was raven-black, and hung in glossy curls round a face whose natural complexion of tinted alabaster was deadened to marble paleness by indisposition. She sat down, apparently fatigued with the effort she had made to join us at so early an hour, and raised her large loving eyes to her young husband's face, as if to read the chances of his election there.

He was about to answer the tacit inquiry,

when Mrs. Mordaunt exclaimed, "How beautifully you are dressed, Mrs. Francis, where *did* you get that blue and white scarf?"

"I hardly know," responded the little bride. "To tell you the truth," added she, laughing, "I sent my maid out very early yesterday on a ramble through the town, and she looked in at every shop window till her taste was satisfied."

The maid, who was rich in such taste for scarfs was summoned, and declared she had bought the admired article at Mr. Oxley's. "Mr. Oxley's! Good heaven!" exclaimed Welford.

"Dear me!" echoed the rose.

"Damnation! what fools women are!" muttered the elder Mr. Mordaunt, while the younger, fondly pressing his bride's hand,

murmured, "Never mind, my own Fanny, you did not know."

The expression of anger, consternation, and anxiety on every body's face, brought a pink flush into the pale cheek of the invalid. "What have I done?" said she, "does it signify where I bought it?"

"*Signify*, my love! to be sure, nothing ever was so vexatious; there is not a man more bitter against us in the town, turncoat that he is; his father was my grandfather's shoe-boy. But for my father's kindness, he would not to-day have the power of giving six votes against me; but no matter—here John! Mary! Betsey! Thomas! some of you!—run down to Mrs. Bradbury's and request her, in Mrs. Francis Welford's name, to send scarfs, of her own selection, for *all* the ladies here—there,

I think that will do," added he, with a relieved air, "and then you must just take off that confounded thing, and put on the one she sends."

"But dear Francis," remonstrated the bride, "the thing only cost twelve shillings—*can* it signify?—it would be such a pity not to wear it after Fanchon's trouble to get such a very very beautiful pale blue;" and she looked affectionately at the folds of the scarf as it hung over her graceful arm. The gentlemen pulled out their watches and declared they must hasten into court to hear the candidates proposed. The ladies were still discussing the merits of Mrs. Francis's toilette, when John, Thomas, Mary, and Betsy who had *all* run down the town to repair the Oxleyism by a purchase at widow Bradbury's *all* came back again, breathless with hurry,

and bringing—no welcome shawls, but a little square-folded, thimble-sealed, angry looking letter, which, being opened and read aloud, was found to contain the following display of English composition and electioneering dignity :—

“ Mrs. Bradbury presents her compliments to Mrs. F. Mordaunt, and begs to say, that she could not think of demeaning herself to send what Mrs. F. M. has already made a purchase of at Mr. Oxley’s over the way, and therefore begs Mrs. F. M. to excuse the scarfs, &c., they not being coming. Mrs. Bradbury doesn’t mean any disrespect to the family in not sending the articles, by no means; but thinks when Mrs. F. M. is a *little older*, she will learn that it takes a great deal to get a friend, but very little to lose one; and can’t

think why Mr. Oxley was preferred to the old house, who have always, TILL NOW, stuck by the Mordaunt family: but remembering people should do as they want to be done by, and not forget and insult old friends, consider themselves entirely at liberty from henceforth."

"That's *four*!" exclaimed Francis Mordaunt.

"No, *seven*," said Welford gloomily; "Seven, if you count her nephews, the Wells's and the Bradburys together—seven."

"Seven what? Four what?" said the little bride, while the tears rose to her eyes at the irrepressible vexation visible on her husband's countenance.

"Seven votes my love—seven votes lost!"

Exclamations of wonder, anger, sorrow, &c.

mingled together, and the party hurried off to the Town Hall, while I calculated what difference the six gentlemen, who had business at Portsmouth, and the seven offended Bradburys would make in a supposed majority of thirty-three. I was satisfied that twenty would equally secure Mr. F. Mordaunt's return, and entered the court with a light heart.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE the Town Clerk was reading the writ, and going through the necessary preliminaries, I gazed round me "to see what I could see," and inquired of Welford all that I wished to understand. There were four candidates for the borough; two to come in, and two to be disappointed. I looked at them all. There was an old, portly, respectable

country gentleman, who looked contentedly round, and now and then leaned over the barrier to speak to one or other of a series of stout built young men strongly resembling a family of large puppies with black and tan muzzles.

These I discovered to be the old gentleman's sons. There was a fine soldier-like, middle-aged gentleman, who did *not* look contented; who had refused to nurse the people's darling baby Reform, and who was consequently exceedingly unpopular in a borough which originally stood in schedule B.; but being afterwards allowed "to stand as it was," felt completely satisfied with Lord John Russell's Bill, and its various amendments.

The old gentleman, Mr. Wareham, was, I found, sure to be elected, and the soldier,

Colonel Ainslie, sure *not* to be elected, so I thought no more of *them*; but turned my attention entirely to Tower Puggins, between whom and Mr. F. Mordaunt was to be “the tug of war.”

Tower Puggins was a short, undistinguished looking individual, with a complexion naturally red, and at present between heat and agitation deepened to the colour of new copper. He looked, as one of his *friends* remarked on another occasion, as if he had just come from superintending the cookery of his own dinner. His political career, such as it was, had been varied by many of “the chances and changes of this mortal life.” He professed always to act up to his principles; but then his principles were those of his party, and he had not always belonged to the *same* party. It was whispered

indeed, that he had changed four times, as they do in that intellectual game of "puss in the corner."

The last obvious variation was his presenting himself as a "reform candidate;" after making several excellent and plausible speeches *against* reform in the House, and opposing his majesty's ministry, (God bless them!) so energetically before the elections, that when, *after* this election, a large purple flag, with "Puggins and Reform!" printed on it, flapped in the faces of some distinguished statesmen who were passing through M——, one of them could not repress an ejaculation, which, if translated by O'Connell into "lady language*," would

* Vide the debate on the Address in the House of Commons, in the course of which O'Connell having been called to order for applying the term "bloody" to the King's speech, professed him-

probably be found to mean "D——n his impudence!"

Au reste, Tower Puggins was not a dull or an uneducated man, but his talents were what is termed of the middling order—so indeed was every thing about him; he was of a middling height—belonged to the middle orders of society—had a middling good reputation—a middling fortune—made middling speeches—even his looks were, as the barmaid at the Rose and Laurel expressed it, "middling well, and well enough."

Well, there stood Puggins; and he spoke to the unwashed populace, and told them that he stood before them the same as he had ever

self ready to use *lady language*, and inquired if there was any objection to the word "brutal."

been—that since the age of nineteen, when they first knew him, he had not changed—(he meant he had not grown)—that he was steady to his principles — was the greatest reformer of the three reform candidates—and then he talked of retrenchment, as if he would have wrung all the salaries from all the public men, and bought broth and mutton for the poor with the proceeds. And the people cheered him heartily, for they knew the words reform and retrenchment meant something beneficial and agreeable, and they did *not* know that there were ever any political changes, except a change of Ministry.

And the Hon. Francis Mordaunt spoke, boldly and briefly, and had *his* portion of cheers—and mentioned *his* steadiness of principle, and asked, like the unhappy Masaniello—“What

have I done, my people—(not to be murdered like that royal fisherman, but)—to be turned out?” They wanted reform, and he had voted for reform—this he explained clearly, and several hurrahs supported the assertion—but did they not also cheer Tower Puggins’s assertions?

And Mr. Wareham spoke, and the five black and tan muzzles turned towards him with respectful approbation, and distant visions of future M. P. ships—and with regard to *his* speech, “seeing was believing,” for it was impossible to hear—but I was told that he was so determined in his principles that he never listened to any debate in the House, for fear it should shake them, but slept through it all, and was awakened to give his vote on *the right side*.

And Colonel Ainslie spoke, which was a pity,

for few would listen, and few understood any thing more than that he was defending opinions, which they, a portion of England's people, had pronounced incorrect.

Then, when I thought the speeches were concluded, to my great surprise, several other minor actors appeared and harangued, some better and some worse—some, very good sense in very bad English, and others, a great deal of nonsense in tolerable grammar. A very passionate grocer flounced, and stormed, and bullied, and seemed more determined to speak in proportion as the company seemed less inclined to hear him, and amid uproar, riot, confusion, hooting, and suffocation, we left the court to prepare for the polling.

That was a weary business, though to me it seemed more familiar and interesting than

the preceding ceremonies, on account of my acquaintance with Hogarth's celebrated pictures. I was irresistibly reminded of these when I saw an old man, stone blind, led up the steps to vote, and several brought from the hospital, to exercise their right, perhaps for the last time. Here again my inexperience was taken by surprise. I had seen the Wells's and irate Bradburys go to the poll. I had heard them distinctly state that they voted for Tower Puggins and Mr. Wareham—*that*, we were already prepared for: but what was my astonishment when Welford came angrily up to me, and said, "there are the three Eweses have voted slap against us—had their positive promise—never knew such rascals in my life,"—and he passed on to the next polling place—and immediately afterwards

Francis Mordaunt himself addressed me with, "Where's Welford?—There's no depending on these fellows—widow Hart's son has just given a plumper to Puggins."—"Aye," said some one in the crowd, "if Mr. Puggins can afford to give fifteen guineas a-piece for Mrs. Hart's geraniums, t'ant no wonder," and a general groan from the Mordauntians, followed by a temporary scuffle with the Pugginites immediately around them, succeeded the speech. "Five other votes gone! My young friend could only come in by a majority of fifteen. Well, that would be sufficient!"

Mopping ourselves with our silk handkerchiefs—hot, angry and tired, we returned to Welford's house for some luncheon, and having drank all the wine which was produced, and answered the anxious inquiries of the ladies

as to how the day was going, we again sallied forth—again to meet with an agreeable surprise. Mr. Wareham had been Francis Mordaunt's colleague in the last Parliament, and was that sort of acquaintance technically termed "a friend,"—it was this probably which caused Francis Mordaunt to quote the old proverb, "*Protect me from my friends, and I will protect myself against my enemies,*" as he pointed to several hand-bills which were being paraded through the street, pasted on the walls, and even put up on the Town Hall itself, and on which were inscribed in large letters—

"Mr. Wareham's committee disclaim all coalition with either of the other candidates."

There was but *one* candidate to whom he could be supposed naturally to lean, and that one, as he read the first placard, said, and

said truly, "my election is as good as lost." From that hour Tower Puggins became, according to the words of the laudatory song I had heard on the first night of my arrival, "a tower of strength"—and when evening closed in, it found Puggins with a majority of thirty over his opponent, and the rival bands striking up at one and the same time—"He promised to buy me a bunch of blue ribands," and, "See the conquering hero comes!"

A few hours of the next morning decided the fate of the borough of M—— for the present Parliament, leaving its interests in the hands of Wareham and Puggins.

More speaking followed—the candidates who were returned humbly thanked their friends; and the candidates who were rejected did precisely the same, with the sole difference that

the former congratulated their party on their own success, and the latter condoled with their supporters, on their defeat. The passionate grocer again endeavoured to obtain a hearing, and again failed; there was hooting, cheering, noise, and suffocation, and the whole thing was over, as I supposed. Again I was destined to be enlightened.

I found Mr. Mordaunt's committee had refused permission to Tower Puggins to be chaired, the consequence of which was, that Mr. Wareham, the five black and tan muzzles, and some wives and children, who had come on purpose to see the show, returned with their ribands on, to put them by for another day. Tower Puggins returned to his lodgings to eat his dinner previous to his departure for the metropolis; and in the meantime, the disap-

pointed voters of the Mordaunt party, insisted on drawing Mr. Francis Mordaunt in his carriage two miles out of the town. I was very much surprised (and so was Puggins) at this method of taking a defeat; but the little bride was half consoled, when, on her husband's return from a procession which bore a great resemblance to a troop of ants collected round a dead beetle, she flung her arms round his neck, and said, "After all, love, you see *you* were the popular candidate, in spite of the lost election."

I returned home to meditate on all I had seen and heard, and wonder the people who voted knew so little what they were voting for.



MONA WATER.

MONA WATER.

The following ballad is founded on an incident which took place in the days when the chieftain of a clan was the most despotic of all rulers. It was told me by an old ferryman, who religiously believed "fair Amie's" death to have been the consequence and punishment of the chief's tyranny towards the widow's son.

I.

OH, Mona's waves are blue and bright

When the sun shines out, like a gay young lover;

But Mona's waves are dark as night,

When the face of Heaven is clouded over.

The wild wind drives the crested foam

Far up the steep and rocky mountain,

And booming echoes drown the voice—

The silvery voice of Mona's fountain.

II.

Wild, wild, against that mountain's side
The wrathful waves were up and beating,
When stern Glenvarloch's chieftain came,
With anxious brow and hurried greeting.
He bade the widowed mother send,
(While loud the tempest's voice was raging,)
Her fair young son across the flood,
Where winds and waves their strife were waging.

III.

And still that fearful mother prayed,
"Oh! yet delay—delay till morning,
For weak the hand that guides our bark,
Tho' brave his heart—all danger scorning."
Little did stern Glenvarloch heed:—
"The safety of my fortress tower
Depends on tidings he must bring
From Fairlie bank within the hour.

IV.

“Seest thou across the sullen wave
A blood-red banner wildly streaming?
That flag a message sends to me,
Of which my foes are little dreaming!
Thy boy must put his boat across,
(Gold shall repay his hour of danger,)
And bring me back, with care and speed,
Three letters from the light-browed stranger.”

V.

The orphan boy leapt lightly in;
Bold was his eye, and brow of beauty;
And bright his smile, as thus he spoke:
“I do but pay a vassal's duty;
Fear not for me, oh! mother dear,
See how the boat the tide is spurning;
The storm will cease, the sky will clear,
And thou shalt watch me safe returning.”

VI.

His bark shot on—now up, now down,
Over those waves—the snowy crested—
Now like a dart it sped along,
Now like a white-winged sea-bird rested.
And ever when the wind sank low,
Smote on the ear that woman's wailing,
As long she watched, with straining eyes,
That fragile bark's uncertain sailing.

VII.

He reached the shore—the letters claimed—
Triumphant heard the stranger's wonder,
That one so young should brave alone
The heaving lake, the rolling thunder.
And once again his snowy sail
Was seen by her, that mourning mother;
And *once* she heard his shouting voice—
That voice the waves were soon to smother!

VIII.

Wild burst the wind—wide flapped the sail—

A crashing peal of thunder followed;

The gust swept o'er the water's face,

And caverns in the deep lake hollowed !

The gust swept past—the waves grew calm—

The thunder died along the mountain ;

But where was he who used to play,

On sunny days, by Mona's fountain ?

IX.

His cold corpse floated to the shore,

Where knelt his lone and shrieking mother ;

And bitterly she wept for him,

The widow's son, who had no brother !

She raised his arm—the hand was closed—

With pain the stiffened fingers parted,

And on the sand those letters dropped,

His last dim thought—the faithful-hearted

X.

Glenvarloch gazed, and on his brow

Remorse and pain and grief seemed blending;

A purse of gold he flung beside

That mother o'er her dead child bending.

Oh, wildly laughed that woman then !

“ Glenvarloch wad ye dare to measure

The holy life that God hath gi'en,

Against a heap of golden treasure ?

XI.

“ Ye spurned my prayer—for we were poor—

But know, proud man, that God hath power

To smite the king on Scotland's throne,

The chieftain in his fortress tower.

Frown on, frown on ! I fear ye not ;

We've done the last of chieftain's bidding ;

And cold he lies, for whose young sake

I used to bear your wrathful chiding.

XII.

“ Will gold bring back the cheerful voice
That used to win my heart from sorrow?
Will silver warm his frozen blood,
Or make my hearth less lone to-morrow?
Go back, and seek your mountain home,
And when ye kiss yere fair-hair’d daughter,
Remember him who died to-night,
Beneath the waves of Mona’s water !”

XIII.

Old years rolled on—and fresh ones came—
Foes dare not brave Glenvarloch’s tower;
But naught could bear the sickness out
That stole into fair Amie’s bower.
The o’er-blown flow’ret in the sun
Sinks languid down and withers daily,
And so *she* sank—her voice grew faint,
Her laugh no longer sounded gaily.

XIV.

Her step fell on the old oak-floor,
As noiseless as the snow-shower's drifting ;
And from her sweet and serious eyes
Seldom they saw the dark lid lifting.
"Bring aid, bring aid," the father cries ;
"Bring aid," each vassal's voice is crying ;
The fair-haired beauty of the isles,
Her pulse is faint, her life is flying.

XV.

He called in vain, her dim eyes turned
And met his own with patient sorrow ;
For well she knew, that fading girl,
How he must weep and wail the morrow.
Her faint breath ceased—the father bent
And gazed upon his fair-haired daughter,
What thought he on?—The widow's son,
And the stormy night by Mona's water!

LINES ON THE DEATH OF THE
STAG.



LINES

ON SEEING MR. LANDSEER'S PICTURE OF THE
DEATH OF THE STAG.

Lo ! where he dies—the forest king,
The untamed creature of the hills ;
His red blood tints the torrent's spring,
And blushes to the distant rills.
On hath he flown, with hunted speed,
In hope to quench that unknown pain*.

* The deer when wounded, always, if possible, takes to the water.

Leap! leap, poor victim, thou art freed,
They cannot bid thee flee again!
He leaps!—the torrent foams around,
He heaves with pain his ebbing breath,
The turbid waters' hollow sound
O'ercomes the gasping sobs of death.
Torn, harassed, wounded, lo! he turns,
With yearning heart and upward gaze,
To where the sunlight faintly burns,
With misty and reflected rays;
Nor knows that, in that distant break,
Over the blue hills far away,
His dying eyes are doomed to take
Their last farewell of light and day.
Those dying eyes! the gaze is there
Which measures not the moments given—
The hunted, *animal* despair,
Which dreads no hell,—and hopes no heaven!

Within that pained and throbbing heart,
Vague sense of suffering and of fear
Bids life's deep instinct act its part,
But tells not being's close is near.

Perish ! the foes have reached thy side,
Who erst pursued thee, vainly flying ;
They struggle with thee in the tide,
And triumph in thy pangs while dying !
Perish ! the crowd of *human* foes,
Who say in sport ; and shout with mirth,
When slow some crowned forehead bows
Its antlered beauty to the earth ;
Are near thee now—they stand and shade
With eager hands their eager eyes,
While fail those energies which made
The only value of their prize.

Hard Triumph, with no heart to grieve,
Watches thy glistening eye grow dim ;
Proud that all strength and fleetness leave
Each sick, and strained, and quivering limb.

'Tis a mysterious thought, th' extent
Of grace, and strength, and life which goes,
(By man, Death's shrinking victim, sent,)
Where dark Oblivion's portals close.

'Tis a mysterious thought ; for great
The proud display of God's high power—
Did He so fair a thing create,
The pastime of a cruel hour ?

But such are not the thoughts which fill
Their hearts, who come with bounding feet,
Proud of superior strength and skill,
To watch the hunted stag's defeat ;
Methinks I see them wandering out

Across those blue autumnal hills,
And pealing back the hunter's shout,
That long the distant echo fills.

I am in Scotland ! Tay's broad lake
Spreads far away before mine eyes,
Loved for its own—for others' sake,
And bright beneath its cloudless skies.

I am in Scotland ! I behold
Shehallions high and narrow peak,
Where evening, purple, dark, and cold,
O'ercomes day's last faint crimson streak.
I hear, Moness, thy deafening fall,
Or wander to the Prince's Cave ;
Climb thy steep side, dark Garoval,
Or glide o'er Rannoch's glassy wave ;
Scarce knowing which may seem most fair,
The glittering sunshine of its day,

Or the pale moonlight, lingering there,
Like love, when hope hath past away !

I wake ! 'twas but the perfect skill,
Young painter, of thy practised hand,
Which could my heart so strangely fill
With visions of another land.
Dear land ! to which thought's weary wing
Yearns often with a wishful flight,
'Midst the dark city's meagre spring,
And scenes of artificial light,
Where the down-dashing torrents brave
The dark rock's side with ceaseless roar ;
Where the calm lake's translucent wave
Curls rippling to the even shore.
That pleasure which is linked with pain,
Hath filled my eyes with happy tears,
And made my heart grow young again

With feelings of forgotten years !

The days return, when morning's rise

Woke me to spend long hours of mirth,

And light sleep left my dazzled eyes,

Suddenly with the sunshine's birth.

Those days are past—my heart, more cold,

Hath learnt to play its practised part,

Less joyous than the days of old,—

Less ready, too, are tears to start.

Like an unsummoned spirit, close

Within my heart my memory lives—

I take life, as its current flows,

I take the spring the city gives ;

Pale blossoms, withering while they blow,

Cramped foliage on the dusty trees ;

No moss-banks where the waters flow—

Nor freshness in the loaded breeze ;

But yet 'tis Spring ; and life is life

Tho' its best dreams grow faint and dim ;
And vanish, in its ceaseless strife,
All energy of heart and limb.
Hopes tempt at first which shrink and die,
Tried in the furnace fire of truth—
And there are feelings which *must* fly
And leave us with our days of youth.
Till like that fair forsaken thing.
Who grew “not happy, but content *,”
When those dear hopes have taken wing
In soberer mood our life is spent.
Nor sigh we for the broken spell,
Save in some deep entranced hour
Like that which o'er my spirit fell
When gazing on thy pencil's power !

* Louise de la Vallière.—“ Je ne suis pas heureuse, mais je suis contente.”

THE FORSAKEN.

THE FORSAKEN.

SCENE FROM AN UNPUBLISHED PLAY.

Enter CLEOFE, carrying a small lamp, which she places on a table.

CLEOFE.

THERE glimmer, feeble melancholy light,
Which thro' the long night's dark and dreary hours
Spendest thy wasting life as mine is spent,
In lonely watchings for my Lord's return !
There glimmer ! happier, happier far than I
In thine unconsciousness : the vexing hours

Pass on, and fever not thy heart—the light
Of dawning day which makes thy flame burn dim,
Sickens thee not. Thou art exempt from sorrow;
Thou art not human ! (Sits down).
Oh that thou wert a beacon light, frail lamp,
And he a mariner on stormy seas—
Or but a glowworm's taper, feebly lighting
The surface of the damp and dewy earth—
So mightst thou guide my wandering mate towards
home !

But, ah ! poor solitary light, to *thee*,
No eye doth turn for hope—no heart for comfort ;
Thou burnest like my love, unseen—uncared for—
Lighting a lone heart, in a desert home.
I heard a step—Alas !—is't *thou*, my sister ?

BERTHA (*embracing her*).

And dost thou weep to find 'tis only I ?
Ah ! those were happy days and full of peace

When to thy quiet love the earth could give
No sound more welcome than a sister's step.

CLEOFE.

And welcome still thy step to me, dear Bertha ;
I do but weep—because I'm worn with watching.

BERTHA.

And wherefore shouldst thou watch ? will watching
bring him ?

Will counting the slow hours upon the dial
Make them to pass more quickly ? Will he come
Less careless and less cold to thy warm welcome
Because a flushed cheek, a beating heart
Await him here ? Or will his tardy step
Inspired with sudden eagerness bound forth,
Because for hours thy straining ear hath sought
To catch its sound ?

CLEOFE (*listlessly*).

No, Bertha.

BERTHA.

Watch no more

For one who spends the uncounted hours afar,
In smiling dalliance by a wanton's side.

CLEOFE.

No, no ; he does not—call her not a wanton ;
Speak not thou ill of anything *he* loves.

BERTHA.

Light anger showest thou for a heavy wrong.
If she be pure—if she be not his choice,
Then wherefore art thou mourning here, forsaken ?
Love hath a soul and spirit of its own :
While to the shrine the worshipper is faithful,
Smiling and fond that spirit hears his vows ;

Guards every look, gives music to each sigh,
And breathes the sunshine of another world
Around the cold realities of this.
But when the master-fiend, Temptation, lures
The faithless votary from that altar's flame;
When the heart, branded with Love's own deep seal,
Is torn—but half-reclaimed—from *his* pure altar,
To serve as offering at a baser shrine,
Then doth he flee away—but not to rest!
He comes again—Love comes—with power as strong,
With wilder wings he rushes to the earth,
And standing by that desecrated shrine,
Assumes a darker form—the form of *hate*,—
And hurls the spoiler from his ruined throne.
Such form *thy* love should wear!

CLEOFE.

Not so, dear Bertha;

Thou speakest of the love of triumph, born

And nursed by conquest's idle vanity.
True love doth know no vengeance—hath no strength
Save in its own existence. He doth sit
Nursing the flame of Hope, whose warmth alone
Doth feed his life, and looks with glittering eyes
And burning cheek, across that altar's fire
To the dim deeds of a far distant world,
Colouring its scenes with Hope's most glowing hue.
But should that flame expire—he sinks away
In the blank darkness chilled, and faint, and sick,
And oft with effort opes his weary eyes,
Which never more behold Hope's welcome light,
And so Love dies—and with him perish all
The hearts whose life was Love. Of such is mine.
If it be proved to me that all I love
Is given to another; if the hand
Gladly clasps hers, that shrinks away from mine;
If the clear voice, whose words bring music with them,
Deny to *me* the rapture of its sound

Only to lavish melody on her ;
If those dark eyes, which do avoid *my* gaze,
Dwell on her beauty and drink in its light
As I have fed my love with sight of *him* ;
If all be false which love so vainly trusts :
If all be true which love so wildly fears :
If he be lost—why Cleofé can die,—
But not avenge, for vengeance cannot give
To her worn heart its one desire—*his* love !

BERTHA.

Weep not, sweet sister—dim not those bright eyes ;
Pale not the colour on thy rose-leaf cheek ;
Hope better days—Thou still mayst win him back.

CLEOFE.

Yea—am I fair ? and are mine eyes so bright ?
I know they tell me so—but oft I deem
That they do mock me in the telling it.

Ah ! what avail these flatteries of the sense,
If that which all the world allows is mine
Cannot retain *one* wanderer by my side ?
What boots the sweetness of my voice's tones
If song nor speech can make *his* footsteps pause ;
And all its efforts breathe a choked farewell,
With scarcely strength to meet his wearied ear ?
What boots the loveliness which strangers praise,
When from that praise I turn with heavy heart
To wish their words of flattery were his ?
Bertha, I am not fair—nor good—nor wise—
Nor quick of speech—nor graceful in my gait—
Nor fit to win men's love—or if I am,
Ah ! wherefore seem I not all these to *him* ?

BERTHA.

Sister, thou grieveest me.

CLEOFE.

'Tis I that grieve !

I'll weep no more. Perchance we wrong him, Bertha ;
Even if his heart hath lost its love for me
Doth it needs follow that he loves another ?
Being weary of me he may seem more cold—
Or not being weary, may he not have formed
Some subtle scheme of proud and restless spirits—
May not ambition win him from my side,
Or duty to the state compel his absence ?
And secrecy enjoin him to conceal
From *me* the cause and purport of that absence ?
Oh ! give me comfort, Bertha—any comfort !
Say that thou think'st it true—or possible—
Possible only, Bertha ! help me thou
To wrestle with my fears.

BERTHA.

Dear Cleofé,

If thou dost love this man—

CLEOFÉ.

If!

BERTHA.

Nay, have patience :

If thou dost love him better than thy life,
Behoves thee speak to him, and from his lips
Obtain the cause of all which vexes thee.

CLEOFÉ.

I speak to him—*I* ask him !—oh the thought,
The very thought doth glue my lips together
And shake my frame with trembling.

BERTHA.

Cleofé—

Even so thou lovest him ! Thy mournful voice,
Thy passionate and eloquent complaining,
Thou hast not strength to utter in his presence ;
He knows not what thou feelest.

CLEOFE.

If he loved,

Then would he *guess* my desolation, Bertha.

But 'tis not fear alone that ties my tongue :

When he doth come, I half forget how much

His absence made me grieve. The shell that mourns

With ceaseless murmur for the dark green wave,

Placed for a moment by some idle hand

In the cool basin of a rippling fount,

Lies in those waters silent and at rest ;

Nor heeds how soon the hand which placed it there,

May draw it forth and cast it on the earth,

Where the sea spirit prisoned in its form,

Thirsty and pining for the distant wave,

Murmurs and wails unnoticed as before.

Like that sea-shell am I !—Once by his side,

The tide of hope seems swelling freshly round me ;

Complaint, and agony, and fear are hushed,

And I forget how soon the chance which gave

May take away ; how often he hath left me,
Ere the half-uttered welcome spoke my joy ;
How little of the *wish* to meet is his
On whose own will alone depends our meeting.

BERTHA.

Behold, he comes !

CLEOFÉ.

It is—it *is* his step !

His voice of musical and high command—
His lofty presence and most glorious brow—
His eye, so full of light, and yet so tender,
Like sunshine burning through the liquid wave.
Is he not mine by all the laws of love ?
Am not I his by all the ties of earth ?
Wife of his bosom—mother of his children—
And shall I dread to claim him ? Bertha, sister,
Thou mayst depart. Alas ! why shrinks my heart ?—

He comes, he comes—oh ! Fear, thou curse of love,
Lay not thy numbing hand upon my lips !
I'll speak with him. (*Enter Lorenzo.*) Lorenzo !

LORENZO.

Cleofé !

CLEOFE.

His voice hath sunk into my inmost heart.

LORENZO (*seating himself abstractedly*).

Cleofé, tis too late for thee to watch ;

Thou shouldst not do't.

CLEOFE.

Lorenzo, were they years

Instead of hours I were repaid for watching

By one kind word, such as I heard of yore,

Such as but rarely now— (*She turns and looks
on him*).

Behold his eye !

He hears me not—he hath forgotten me !

An image is before him—but not mine :

A voice sounds to his ear, but not my voice,

My words of welcome—lost in *her* farewell !

Love still is sweet to him—but not my love ;

Life still is dear to him—but not for me ;

And the half smile that curves his eager lip,

Is meant for her whose house is not his home !

How thick a darkness closes on mine eyes—

Lorenzo !

LORENZO (*starting up and catching her*).

Cleofé ! what ails thee, dearest ?

CLEOFÉ.

Death--death—I *hope* 'tis death ! (*She faints.*)

THE
YOUNG HEIR'S DEATH-BED.

THE
YOUNG HEIR'S DEATH-BED.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a heavy silence in the magnificent apartment, for the young heir of the house of Rothseaton lay panting with fever, and almost unconscious of the presence of those around him. The fatal decision had been pronounced; the inheritor of an Earldom, of wealth, titles, and distinction; the beautiful and spoilt child of prosperity, was to be snatched from his parents, and hid in the cold earth.

Lord Rothseaton walked impatiently up and down the room; from the large windows with their heavy crimson curtains, which threw a mock glow on the cheek of his child, to the oak door with its ivory handles and curious carving. He paused, and gazed into the faces of the three physicians, whom a vain care had assembled round that bed—and a cold thrill passed through his heart. He thought of the joy and bell-ringing at the birth of his beautiful and sickly boy—of his ambitious hopes—of his hatred for his cousin, who was the next heir—and he flung himself into a seat with sullen despondency.

The physicians continued to converse on different topics in an under tone; and while apparently consulting on the state of their patient, communicated to each other the news

of the day; births, marriages, and deaths; family grievances and political intrigues. From time to time there was a pause—a glance at the bed—and then they conversed again.

A little apart from the medical group, sat the sick nurse, covered with lace and ribands, and drowsily examining the curiously fine linen belonging to the dying child, whose wardrobe she was prepared to prove should by right of custom be hers, as soon as the breath had left his body.

Close to the bed stood the young heir's own attendant, a French lady, who had been induced by distress to accept the office of *bonne* to the sickly and wayward offspring of the House of Rothseaton. The quiet sorrow of many years of trial was written in her face. Her relations had been butchered in the streets of Paris, or

murdered by the guillotine; her two children had died of the small-pox when the depth of her poverty disabled her from procuring them the commonest necessities of life; her husband had perished of a broken heart, without being able to bid her farewell.

Sorrow has one thing in common with prosperity—it makes us selfish. The feelings that have been wrung intensely remain numbed and incapable of deep sympathy in the afflictions of others.

Standing as she did by the death-bed of her little charge, she could not but grieve over him, for there are few hearts in which a child's faults will inspire dislike. She could not but remember the death-bed of her own little ones; and the tears stole down her wasted cheek as she watched; but the predominant feeling of her

mind was a dread of the approaching desolateness of her situation;—a few hours more, and she would be again thrown upon the world, without a home—without friends—a lonely being, to struggle for her livelihood—to endure the taunts of some, and the insulting compassion of others—and this thought was the bitterest in her heart.

Was there, then, no one amid the gilded pomps and crowded luxuries of this chamber of death, who cared for the individual being of the beautiful boy, whose numbered breathings still came shorter and shorter? was the ambition of his father—the interest of the physicians—the mercenary calculation of the hired watcher of his feverish nights—the half selfish regret of the widowed French-woman—was this all that stood between his soul and heaven—all that rose

from mortal hearts to tempt God to spare the frail life he had given so lately? Was there no wild prayer like that which David breathed in the agony of his soul, when the child of his sin was taken from him? Was there no *mother* in whose gentle heart all was nothing in comparison of his existence? There was.

Pale and exhausted—her dark and eager eyes clouded and heavy with watching—sat that young mother by the bed of her dying child. Grandeur, and power, and wealth—the inheritance of titles—the possession of riches: what were they then to her—to him? life—*life* was all she desired—*his* life, which gold could not buy—which pride could not command—his life, and bread to give him, and her soul would be satisfied! She held his hand in hers afraid to move—afraid to speak: his languid head rested

heavily upon her bosom ; and cramped, chilled, and aching as she felt, she yet smiled bitterly when the sick nurse offered to relieve her of her precious burden. Relieve her ! it might be the last time his head should ever rest on her breast—the last time his breath might be warm on her cheek ; and as the thought passed through her mind, the wan smile quivered off her lip, and a light shudder told that she had choked back the tears, which shed, might have broken his slumber.

Day-light faded away—the gleams of parting sunset ceased to shed a glory through the room ; the rolling of carriages through the square became less frequent, and the lamps shone through the foggy close of a London autumn evening.

Lord Rothseaton approached the bed ; his

harsh though handsome features were dark with despair—he set his teeth and folded his arms as he gazed on his son's face, for death had thrown a deeper shadow there since last he looked on him. “If you had taken more care of yourself, Lady Rothseaton,” murmured he with bitterness, “before your infant was born, instead of romping like a child, he might not have been dying now; it would have been better never to have had an heir, than to watch this poor boy through years of ill health and see him die at last.”

He lifted his eyes as he spoke to the face of his young wife, as if he feared the impression of his own words. But she heard them not. Worn out with watching, she had yielded to a torpor between sleep and faintness; her pale cheek rested near that of her boy, whom

she still clasped to her bosom, and her heavy half-closed eyes still glistened with tears. "Emily," said Lord Rothseaton in an altered tone, "this has been too much for you—come away, love, and rest."

She started wildly, and exclaimed—"Is he dead? is he dead?"—and then flinging herself into her husband's arms, she wept long and bitterly. A low moan of suffering recalled her to herself. In vain the physicians advised—in vain her husband entreated. "No," said she, "it will soon be over, and *then*—then indeed I may rest."

The day had faded—the night crept on; Lady Rothseaton rose and looked from the window on the dim trees in the square, and the lines of lamps which lit the silent city.

The confused murmur of night fell upon her ear, and involuntarily she reflected how often in the heated assembly, in the crowded ball, she had sought a moment's coolness on the balcony, and never as now felt how many sighs of pain—how many drunken shouts—how many sounds of revelry, joy, sorrow, anguish and fear, had mingled in the confused murmur which is termed the *silence of night*. Awful silence! in which every human passion mingled without power to convey itself to the listening ear.

Suddenly the sound of music, distinctly audible, smote on her heart;—they were giving a ball within three doors of Rothseaton's house;—“Alas, my dying boy!” said the mother, as she crept back to his bedside.

The music continued, but it was faintly heard within the room; it would not disturb him—that was comfort. Through the long and weary watches of the night, the well-known airs haunted her; music and dancing within three doors of her, and *she* sat waiting for the last gasp of that failing breath.

The night passed away—the long, long endless night—day-dawn came bright and blue through the window—the last carriage rolled from the door of the lighted house—the last guest departed. Lady Rothseaton still sat by that sick bed, listless and weary; she turned her eyes to the dawning light; it seemed to her then as if *one* day more were a boon—as if to watch another sunrise—another sunset—in an uncertainty which admitted of wild and unreasonable hope, were something

to be thankful for: she knelt and prayed he might not die *that* day.

The young heir woke; he called feebly and mournfully for water; the cup of embossed gold was lifted to his parched lips, but in vain; the lips parted, and a wild and beautiful smile lit his brow — evidently there was a sudden cessation from pain — “Mother, mother,” he whispered, “I am well now.” Lady Rothseaton bent over him; lower and lower she bent, as he sank back, and then a wild shriek told that hope and fear were over!

Who cared, who knew when the young heir died? The evening of that dawning day a large party were assembled at another house in the same square, “The Rothseatons have lost their child,” said the lady of the house.

“ Was he an only son ? ” said the guest.

“ Yes.”

“ Indeed !—pray who does the property go to ? ”

LINES.



I.

I THINK of thee—not as thou art,
In the cold and hollow grave;
Where the sun's rays vainly dart
And the cypress branches wave :
But I think of thee bright and young
With life on thy beaming brow,
And I sing all the songs that we sung—
Though thou never canst hear me now !

II.

I think of thee—not with the grief
Of those past and passionate years,
When my heart sought a vain relief
In bitter and burning tears—
But I think of thee fond and gay,
Unshadowed by death or pain ;
And smiles on thy red lips play—
As they never may play again !

III.

I think of thee—not as I thought
When I stood by thine early tomb,
And all that this world had brought
Seemed wrapped in a changeless gloom
But I think of the living friend
Of my happiest early days,
And what thou wert wont to commend
I do—though thou canst not praise.

IV.

Calmly I welcome the guest
Who knows not he's loved for thy sake :
I laugh when he tells me some jest
Which thou in thy life-time didst make ;
In the groves where thy footsteps have been
I wander with others, nor weep
When a glimpse of some favourite scene
Brings thoughts of thy long dark sleep.

V.

But, oh ! though a change hath come o'er
My heavy and mournful heart—
Though thy name hath the power no more
To bid the warm tear-drop start—
The sun shall grow dark in the skies,
And the turf spring no more on the hill,
When thy love from my memory dies—
Lost heart, I remember thee still !

“I DO NOT ASK THY LOVE FROM
FATE.”

I.

I do not ask thy love from fate,
Though blessed those thou lovest are ;
Thou art to me, beloved one,
Even as a star,
For which the dreaming spirit pineth,
While far away its cold light shineth.

II.

I do not ask to hear thy voice
Fall gently on my listening ear ;
My fainting soul would melt and die
As if with fear,
If thou shouldst utter words to me
Of more than common courtesy.

III.

Alas ! my heart with stifled sigh
Met even that lip's most careless tone,
And shrank beneath thy wild dark eye
Like flowers at noon !
How would it bear the burning words
Breathed forth in love's impassioned chords

IV.

But might I (as a spirit haunts
That silent spot it loves the best)
Meet the strange witchery of thy gaze
 And watch thy rest,
And treasure up each glance and word,
Myself unseen—unknown—unheard :

V.

Then would I wander by thy side
In lonely love for evermore,
And follow thee with gliding step
 From shore to shore ;
Nor breathe one selfish wish to be
The cloud across thy memory.

VI.

But sometimes in thy dreaming ear,
Through the long watches of the night,
I'd rouse with some forgotten word
 Thy spirit's might ;
And thou shouldst wake, and wonder why
My voice's tones seemed floating by. .

VII.

My voice's tones ! oh ! will one word
Of all I uttered laughingly,
With lips that trembled while they smiled,
 Return to thee ?
I do not ask thy love—and yet—
Would that thy heart could not forget !

KATE BOUVERIE.

KATE BOUVERIE.

CHAPTER I.

“WELL, my dear Harry, I declare you’re handsomer than even your father was at your age; if Kate does not lose her heart to you at first sight, I shall be much surprised.” Such were the words addressed by the widow of Colonel Bouverie to her only son; and as she closed the sentence she dropped the eye-glass through which she had attentively considered

his features, and gave a sigh of regret, partly to the memory of her husband, and partly to the recollection of her own past loveliness, which a mirror opposite told her, had sadly faded during the three-and-twenty years which had matured the rosy infant into the young man by her side.

“I hear Kate is rather odd, mother.”

“What do you mean, my dear boy? she is a charming girl with a large fortune, and you have been engaged to her these twelve years? What *do* you mean?” and again the eye-glass assisted the perception of the fair widow.

Harry Bouverie did not explain what he meant; but he bit his lip and looked out of the window, and then his eyes wandered to his two sisters, the younger of whom, Pamela, was lying half asleep on the sofa, her long black

eyelashes all but closed on the pinkest cheek in the world; while the elder, Annette, sat apparently reading, but occupied less with her book than the subject of conversation; of which, however, she took no further notice than by meeting her brother's glance with a meaning and *espiégle* smile.

“We shall start for Scotland next week,” said Mrs. Bouverie, in a displeased tone; fixing her eyes on the *piquant* countenance of her rebellious daughter.

“So soon, mamma!” murmured Pamela; and opening her wide blue eyes in astonishment at the idea of anything being performed in a week, she again resigned herself to a state of drowsy enjoyment, strongly resembling that in which an Angola cat passes its summer day.

Annette made no reply, but the smile which

had offended still lurked and quivered round the corners of her mouth.

“I wonder how Gertrude has turned out,” thought the widow, as she withdrew her glance. “She was handsomer than either of her sisters: no—nothing *can* be handsomer than Pamela,” and the eye-glass was allowed complacently to rest on the exquisitely proportioned form and beautiful face of her youngest daughter, while a vague and rapid calculation of the different sort of match she might expect for each of the girls passed through her mind.

Pamela was already a duchess, when a visiter arriving turned her thoughts into another channel.

When Mrs. Bouverie ran away with her pennyless husband, and married him at Gretna-Green, as much from love of the frolic as from

love of the man, she acted upon impulse ; but having her own reasons, in latter life, for disapproving of such motives of action, she had vowed that she never *would*, and it was her boast that she never *did*, “do anything without a plan.”

She had successfully formed and executed a number of small plans, but her expected master-stroke was to marry her son to his cousin Kate, who was to inherit the whole of the Bouverie property.

In furtherance of this plan she had sent her daughter Gertrude to stay with General Bouverie and his daughter, during her own residence in Italy, for Pamela's health : in furtherance of this plan, her letters to her absent child had always contained the most miraculous accounts of Harry's sweet temper, talents, and

anxiety to return from the continent; and in furtherance of this plan she was now about to visit Scotland, for the treble purpose of reclaiming her daughter, introducing her son, and paying a visit to the old General, who, pleased with the prospect of marrying his child to a Bouverie, and thus keeping the property in the family, looked forward with eager satisfaction to their arrival.

Kate, too, anticipated with tranquil joy the fate which had been chalked out for her in infancy, and which appeared to promise all human happiness. She was already in love with Mrs. Bouverie's descriptions of her cousin; and forgetting that he was but a little fair shy boy when she had last seen him, believed the ideal Harry to be the counterpart of the object of her affections.

Lady Catherine Bouverie, the General's wife, ran away from him soon after her marriage, and her husband was for a length of time inconsolable. He gave up all society, shut himself up in a wild and romantic place, he had in Northumberland, and devoted his whole time to his little girl.

Kate Bouverie became in consequence, at a very early age, the companion and friend of her father. She would sit with him when he had letters to write, and copy, in a clear neat hand, dry directions respecting farm business, and show cattle, without ever wearying, or appearing to consider it as a task.

Latin, geography, and arithmetic, were the studies pointed out to her by her father; she had no governess (General Bouverie cursed accomplishments as the cause of a woman's

ruin), but she was an excellent French scholar, and took sketches from nature without any other assistance than what was afforded by intuitive talent. Such studies, however, occupied but a small portion of her time.

Slightly formed, but well knit and vigorous in limb, her naturally good constitution strengthened by constant exercise, and the enjoyment of heaven's pure air, she would follow her father with a light step and a merry heart, in most of his shooting excursions; and when that father caught her glowing cheek and fearless eye, he felt as much tenderness and pride in her beauty as ever monarch in his newly-crowned child. Kate was also an incomparable horsewoman: no road was too dangerous, no steed too spirited, for her nerves. The risk was to her a source of wild and intense enjoyment.

With this being, strange and eccentric in her habits, romantic and enthusiastic in her disposition, Mrs. Bouverie's second daughter, Gertrude, had spent the four last years of her girlhood.

Taken from amongst very worldly people, at an age when the youthful heart is most susceptible of strong impressions, no wonder if Gertrude, whose feelings were naturally warm, became ardently attached to this strangely fascinating being, the first *she* had ever seen who was perfectly natural.

The merits of Kate Bouverie (and she had many) were perfections;—her faults were not such in the eye of her youthful companion. Indeed, the latter became gradually as much the objects of imitation, as the more worthy points of her character; for Gertrude, with the same

degree of ardent feeling, had few of her cousin's better qualities; headstrong, rebellious, gifted with intense vanity, and with something peculiar of harshness and coarseness in her ill-trained mind, she copied the habits, without being able to seize the virtues of Kate Bouverie; and the consequence was such as might be expected.

The same words and actions which acquired a wild charm from the native sweetness and originality of Kate, became perfectly odious when copied by Gertrude; and the utter want of tact she displayed, joined with her strange manners, made her conversation as galling to the feelings as it was revolting to the delicacy of those who were her occasional associates. Even Kate, who had sighed for a female companion to share her tasks and her sports, could scarcely be said to be fond of her present

associate. Before Gertrude had been a fortnight at Heathcote-lodge, Kate heartily wished herself alone again, in spite of flattery, open and expressed, and the more silent and more gratifying flattery of imitation. What did Kate care whether others thought her handsome, when her father's eyes silently told her how much rather he would look on her countenance than on any other in the universe? What did she care that her horsemanship was admired, as long as her little Arab, Selim, carried her over the wild moor with the speed of lightning—the blue arch of heaven over her, and the free air of heaven round her head?

At length the day of meeting arrived. Mrs. Bouverie and her family (after being twice overturned) drove up the long avenue, and never, perhaps, did so uncongenial a party

assemble round the dinner table as met that night.

The affected worldly mother; the conceited, talkative, half-French, half-English Annette; the foolish, languishing beauty, Pamela; and, opposite to these, the wild, but graceful and kind-hearted Kate, the shy handsome Captain Bouverie, and Gertrude, half-contemptuous, and half-jealous, as she looked at the manner and attire of her sisters.

Every day increased the mutually repellant nature of the qualities each was endowed with, by making them more known to each other; and it was with difficulty that Mrs. Bouverie concealed her dislike in order to forward a marriage so much to the advantage of her son.

His sisters were not so cautious: Annette, with a keen perception of the ridiculous, and

considerable talent, occupied herself daily, almost hourly, in ridiculing,—not Kate—she had tact enough to see that it would be a dangerous attempt—but the clumsy imitation of Gertrude she visited with unsparing satire ; and the consequent coldness between the sisters drew the two cousins more together, and opened Kate's heart more towards the faulty Gertrude, than four years of constant companionship.

The unheard-of insolence of her niece, who christened the younger Miss Bouverie “the squirrel and the dormouse,” made their affectionate mother ill for two days ; and the ejaculation of the old General, who said, on seeing Annette and Pamela enter the apartment in their baptiste dresses, “I wish to God, Mrs. Bouverie, you would put something decent on those girls,” at length determined the crafty

widow on making her own escape at least, and leaving her son to pay his court to his eccentric bride at his leisure.

To Captain Bouverie she spoke of the errors of her niece in a kind, indulgent, *motherly* way, assuring him she was convinced that time and instruction, and her own valuable society, would make his wife all he could wish. Captain Bouverie's only reply was a deep sigh; and they parted.

It was agreed, after much entreaty, that Gertrude should still remain at Heathcote-lodge, and return under her brother's escort. Mrs. Bouverie, comforting herself by the reflection that, when once Gertrude was at home again, she should be able to re-model her manners.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the departure of the trio, the party at Heathcote-lodge were more happy, more companionable; but Harry Bouverie was disappointed, and he could neither conceal it from himself nor from his sister, nor even in a degree from Kate herself.

Shy, vain, and with an insupportable dread of ridicule, the impression made by the beauty,

warm-heartedness, and evident affection of his cousin, was always painfully contrasted in his mind with what *others* would think and say of her. He figured her introduced to the world—his world—as his wife. He imagined to himself the astonished stare of his well-bred friends, the affected disgust of his *fine* female acquaintances, and at such moments he loathed the sight of Selim, hid his face from the sunshine and the breeze, and groaned when Kate passed her fingers through the short curls of her distinguished-looking head—though that hand was small and white, and her hair bright and glossy. Annette's letters were by no means calculated to improve his feelings in this respect. "I see her," said this amiable sister, "entering the rooms at D——e House; all eyes bent upon her; all tongues murmuring her praise.

I see her in the Park, Selim not quietly entering the ride by the posts intended for that purpose, but *franchissant les bornes* (as her mistress does) at one free leap, from long habit which, as you know, is second nature. I am practising the song, '*Mein Schatz ist ein reiter,*' as I doubt not it will become a great favourite of yours, and only beg of you to be careful not to go *more* than forty miles a day, as it will be sadly injurious to your health and looks, frère Adonis ; and you know that any alteration in the *latter* would bring the (grey?) hairs of my mother with sorrow to the grave."

The slave to the opinions of others retired to rest, full of recollections inspired by that letter. "From the force of habit, which is second nature," muttered he, as he turned for the twentieth time on his restless pillow.—He

fell asleep, and dreamed that he was married, and that his brother officers rose from the mess-table to drink Kate's health. Just as he was lifting the glass to his lips, he saw Kate enter; she was dressed in a long green riding habit: she passed her taper fingers rapidly through her hair: he remonstrated; he entreated her to leave the mess-room; but she only laughed: he rose from his place, and, walking to the spot where she stood, endeavoured to persuade her to go. Suddenly, he thought she turned and kicked him, and the little well-turned, firmly-knit ankle was unaccountably transformed into Selim's hoof. He started in violent pain, and woke.

Full of mingled irritation and sadness, Harry Bouverie sat alone that day in his uncle's library, leaning his aching head on his hand,

and gazing listlessly from the window on a long avenue of lime trees, which opened on the moor.

He was interrupted by the entrance of Gertrude, who, tapping him lightly on the shoulder with her whip, exclaimed, "Why, Harry, what are you musing about? Come, come, and take a ride with us."

Harry shook his head. "Oh come, there's a good fellow; cheer up, drive away black thoughts, and let Romeo be saddled quickly, for my horse and Selim will take cold standing so long."

"For God's sake," said Captain Bouverie impatiently, "do strive to be less like that anomalous being they intend for my wife." Then suddenly turning, he added, "Oh, Ger-

trude, if I marry that girl, we shall both be miserable !”

There was a breathless silence ; for as Harry turned, he beheld, standing within two paces of him, his cousin Kate. The eloquent blood rushed as rapidly to that glowing cheek as if the sun had never touched and mellowed its original tint of pure rose, and the big tears stood for a moment in those clear, kind, blue eyes ; then a deadly paleness overspread her face, and Captain Bouverie thought she would have fainted. He sprang forward, but the moment his hand touched hers, she started from him ; and before they could follow her to the door, the fleet foot of Selim had borne his mistress far over the wild moor, which was her favourite ride.

For long weary miles she galloped on at full speed, till even the little Arab relaxed its exertions, and, unchecked by the bridle, slackened its pace. The alteration recalled Kate Bouverie to herself. She stopped and dismounted, and, gazing far round on the barren heath, as if to assure herself that no human eye could witness her weakness, she flung herself on the ground, and wept bitterly.

“My God!” exclaimed the unhappy girl, as she clasped her hands and raised her eyes to heaven, “What have I done to make him hate me?” and as the speech she had heard again rung in her ears, she contrasted the affection she had borne him ever since she could remember—the pleasure with which she looked forward to sharing his home—the many resolu-

tions never to suffer her past liberty to tempt her to dispute his will, and to keep a careful watch over that rebellious heart which was his alone—with the sentiments of dislike, almost of disgust, which he had openly expressed towards her. Again she repeated to herself, “What *have* I done?” and again she wept, till, weary and exhausted, she sunk into a profound slumber.

When she woke, the calm glow of sunset was on the moor, and Selim was feeding quietly at a little distance. She mounted her favourite, for the first time without a caress, and for the first time she turned towards home with a slow step and a heavy heart.

At dinner, Kate Bouverie was in wild spirits, and though her cheek was pale, and her eyes dim, her manner repelled all attempt at ex-

planation or consolation, even from Gertrude. She retired early to rest, pleading a bad headache to her anxious father.

The next morning the following note was brought to her by her maid :—

“ MY DEAR KATE,

“ For God’s sake, see and hear me patiently for a few minutes, and be to me what, except in my hours of madness and folly, I have always hoped to see you.

“ HARRY BOUVERIE.”

She was just struggling against the temptation of once more conversing with her beloved cousin, when a tap at the door announced Gertrude. “ Come in,” said she, in a low voice. Gertrude obeyed the summons.

“Heavens! Kate, how ill you look,” exclaimed she; “and you have not been to bed last night. Oh, Kate! how can you be so foolish for a little quarrel.”

“A *little* quarrel, Gertrude,” said her companion; and a slow bitter smile crept round her mouth,—“but sit down, and say what you came to say, for I must go to my father.”

Gertrude came as her brother’s ambassador, and earnestly did she endeavour to promote peace, for she loved Harry, and almost worshipped his betrothed wife; but she had none of the tact necessary for the performance of such a task. While she wounded the feelings of the sensitive girl, she addressed, by the constant allusion to her brother’s distaste for her manners and habits; she also bluntly reasoned upon the impossibility of his feeling otherwise,

when he looked forward to presenting her to the world, because he knew that the world would judge harshly of her; and with natural coarseness of mind, she seemed to suppose that nothing more than a mutual concession of certain points, an apology on the part of Harry, and a sort of "kiss-and-be-friends" ceremony, was necessary to establish them exactly in the situation they were before.

But she spoke a language Kate Bouverie did not understand. What could it signify to Harry what the world, that strange world, thought of her, as long as he himself was satisfied of her affection, and pleased with her society? What had the opinions of others to do with the comfort of his home? the opinions of others, too, none of whom he appeared to respect, and many of whom he openly avowed

to be worthless? No, *that* could not be the reason of his dislike; and she resented the supposed attempt to impose on her understanding.

Had Gertrude had to deal with one of her own disposition, the task would have been comparatively easy. Had her cousin been angry, she could have soothed her; but vanity had no place in Kate Bouverie's heart—it is the vice of society, and she had lived alone almost from childhood. It was her heart that was crushed, and it would have required a tenderer and far more skilful hand to have healed the blow.

By his sister's hands, Harry received an answer to his appeal; it was as follows:—

“After what passed yesterday, dear Harry,

it can serve no good purpose to comply with your request, but will only give great pain to both of us. I shall tell my father *I* cannot marry you, as it would grieve him were he to know how differently others can think of his only child. I am at a loss to know how I have forfeited your good opinion; but of this I am very sure, that I have never *voluntarily* given you a moment's displeasure. We are not likely to meet often again, but I shall always be glad to hear good news of you, and always feel an interest in all that concerns you. I would not wish to end with a reproach, but I would fain you had *told* me what chance discovered to me. Did you intend to marry me under the conviction that our union would tend to the misery of both? If

it is because you are attached to another that you have dealt thus strangely by me, I will hope your present freedom may conduce to your future happiness. If it is really and truly for the reasons Gertrude gave me, may that world, dear Harry, of which you are a worshipper, be able to repay you for your submission to its opinions !”

It was with tolerable composure that Kate Bouverie wrote and despatched this note ; but with her father the fountain of her tears again burst forth. The General was electrified ; he had never seen her weep before ; for in that happy home she had had no cause for sorrow, and her tears made an impression on him that erased from his memory the long-cherished plan

of continuing the property in the family by this much-desired union. He himself informed Captain Bouverie of his daughter's decision, and that information was accompanied with expressions of regret.

CHAPTER III.

YEARS rolled on. Kate Bouverie continued unmarried, in spite of the offers of more than one suitor for her hand. Gertrude remained at home, under the auspices of her careful parent. But though self-love and vanity did what her mother's advice would most assuredly *not* have done, and she soon began to conform in some degree to the tastes of the people she was amongst; still her real and acquired faults

were not indicated, and "*as odd as Ger Bouverie*" became a by-word by no means pleasing to the rest of the family.

Taunted and reproached at home, alternately caressed and sneered at abroad, Gertrude always entered a ball-room with a vague spirit of defiance against uncommitted injuries. At once affecting to scorn, and making faint endeavours to conciliate the world; beautiful in person; harsh in manner; fearless by nature; she said everything, and did everything that came into her head, and the consequence was as might be expected. She was flattered by those she amused; courted by those to whom her notice gave a sort of notoriety; admired by many; and abused by the whole of her acquaintance.

Pamela's drowsy existence was by no means

interrupted or disturbed by her sister's strange ways; but Annette, while, by dint of mocking, she unconsciously caught something of the gesticulating manner and audible tone of voice which accompanied Gertrude's speeches, resented as an injury the notoriety she thus obtained, and visited it with the whole force of her wit; while, forgetting how far different the copy was from the original, Harry Bouverie never ceased to congratulate himself on his escape from the matrimonial snare prepared for him.

While things were in this state, Mrs. Bouverie received a letter one morning, which forced an ejaculation even from her little, cold, compressed lip, and sent a momentary flush of emotion to her faded cheek. "Your cousin Kate is dead," said she, turning to her daughters;

and then, as if seeking to excuse her own emotion as she felt the rush of tears to her eyes, she added "but—she is dead in such a shocking way." The letter was read, and it was with bitter feelings that Harry Bouverie listened to its contents.

Since the departure of her cousin, poor Kate's whole character seemed to have changed. Wild with a sort of delirious gaiety at one time—dejected and incapable of occupying herself at another, she seemed always the slave of some unintelligible caprice. Her eye grew dimmer, her figure thinner and less graceful; her very voice—that low, laughing voice which had given a charm to all she said—acquired a sharpness and shrillness which was foreign to it.

Gloom sat on her brow like shadows in a sunny place, and while her father merely re-

marked that Kate's temper was not so good as it had been—the old nurse declared that her child was dying of a broken heart.

But it was not by slow degrees—by the sapping and mining of grief—by the wasting away of the body's strength under the soul's weakness, that one so full of life and energy, was to die. Suddenly, in the flower of her youth, she was to be cut off, as if it were vain to wait till decay should creep into so slight a heart, and within so bright a form.

Amongst other changes, Kate had become very absent; frequently she forgot she was in the presence of others, and with a low, moaning exclamation, would hide her head and weep: frequently she would remain out on the sunny moors for hours, and wander home, unconscious that the day was drawing to a

close, and that her father was waiting her return. At such times she would fling her arms around his neck, and give way to an hysterical burst of mingled tears and laughter at her own thoughtlessness, and then put on the wild gaiety of a child.

There came a day when her father waited in vain; when the look that pleaded for pardon—the voice that soothed—the laugh that cheered him—were lost to him for ever; and that hurrying step which was the signal for the old man to rise, and advance to fold his daughter in his arms, was silent in the desolate corridors of his house.

All that was ever known of Kate's death, was told by a peasant girl, who, while waiting for her young sister to cross the moor, saw a horse with a lady on it, flying at full speed

down the narrow road which skirted it. She ran as fast as she was able to the foot of a little bridge, which made a sudden and short angle from the road. She stood still and listened, but the dashing and murmuring of the waters prevented her hearing the approach of the horse's hoofs. She called, but nothing except the faint echo, muffled, as it were, by the branches which shadowed the wild and rocky stream, answered her cry. She waited, knowing that the road had no other turn, but all remained sleeping in the quiet sunshine as before. Suddenly a sick and horrible fear crossed the girl's heart—she turned, and looked far down into the bed of the stream, and there among the broken granite and white stones, she distinctly saw some dark object; and, while her heart beat so loud as almost to stifle the sound

she fancied that a faint wailing cry swept past on the wind.

Slowly, and with cautious steps, she crept down round by the bridge, over the bank, swinging by a branch, or letting herself slip down the steep and broken ground. At length she descended into the torrent, which ran meagre and half dried up by the summer sun—struggling over and under and round the stones in its course, murmuring and complaining as it went. There lay the little Arab Selim, with the last life-pulse faintly quivering through its limbs—and there, with her face hidden, and the stream rippling through the curls of her golden hair, lay poor forsaken Kate.

The girl stopped; a natural and unconquerable horror made her pause before she would venture to turn round and lift what she doubted

not was the face of a corpse, bruised and horrible. At length she approached, and with shuddering hands raised the head of the unhappy girl from the waters. No bruise was there—pure and calm, with closed eyes and parted lips, and the glistening drops hanging on the still fresh pink of her cheek—she lay,—but death was in her face.

Years rolled on ; Annette's more successful plan for her brother's advancement was put into execution, and Harry became the easy husband of the all-accomplished and beautiful Lady Sarah Davenel, the chosen companion and confidante of the sprightly Miss Bouverie.

Lady Sarah was a duke's daughter ; she therefore thought herself entitled to treat her husband as her inferior. She was a beauty and a spoilt child, and she therefore conceived

herself at liberty to accept the homage of those around her, and to show off sundry little airs of wilfulness and vanity, just as if she had not married the handsomest man in England, as she was in the habit of calling Harry. She was headstrong and violent ; and the same adherence to her own fancies, which led her to oppose her doting father on the subject of her marriage, led her now to oppose her husband. She was frivolous and heartless, but she was a strict observer of the rules of etiquette. Maradan Carçon made her dresses, Cavalier drest her hair, and *the world* declared she was a charming woman.

Five years after his marriage, accident brought Harry Bouverie to the spot where his young cousin, with whom from his infancy he had expected to pass his life, had died unseen,

alone, without one to hear her last word. He was with a party of pleasure, and their loud laughing voices rang in his heart as he bent over the little bridge, and with straining eyes looked downwards, as if he could still see the light form which for years had mouldered in the grave. "Is that a good trout stream, Bouverie?" asked one of the gentlemen.

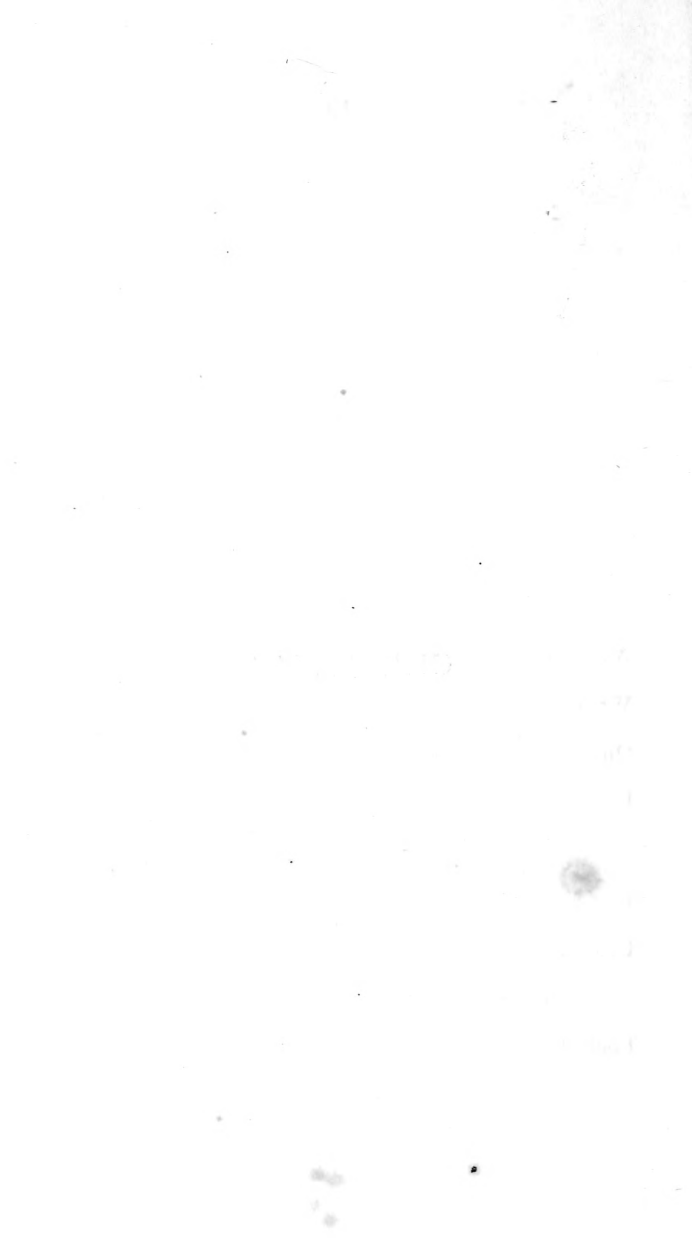
Harry turned hastily away, and catching Lady Sarah by the arm, he muttered, "Come away—it was here that Kate died—they will drive me wild."

"You are always sentimentalising about that girl," said his wife pettishly; "I am sure it is no great compliment to me, the way you regret her." She moved on, and joining the party walked forwards.

"Oh! Kate, Kate," exclaimed Harry Bou-

verie, as rushing tears dimmed his view of that death scene, "was it for such a heart, I scorned you?"

CHRISTMAS.



CHRISTMAS.



ANOTHER year hath closed. How swift they pass !

When once Fate's tardy hand the thread hath spun

Once set—the sand within Time's hour glass

Is quickly run !

While waited for—how slow the days advanced—

Past by—how like a dream their speed appears—

Looked forward to, — how bright the distance
glanced—

Looked back upon—how dimmed with secret tears !

Barrier of hopes fulfilled, ambition gained,
Mysterious goal which seemed to end the race,
How little in thy course hath been obtained !—
And now, *another* year must take thy place.
Ere we pass on with eager hasty strides
To this new portion of uncertain Time ;
Ere we would rend the shadowy veil which
hides

Those future hours of joy—or woe—or crime,—
Shall we not pause, and take a slow review
Of days whose deeds no effort can recal,
And mingle sorrow in that long adieu,
Even though their sweetness hath been tinged with
gall ?

Shall we not part from thee, departing year,
With tenderness—as from a dying friend,
Whose very faults (familiar faults !) grow dear,
When all which charmed or saddened hath an
end ?

Those faults—we know they can offend no more—
Those days—we feel they never may return—
We were impatient till they both were o'er—
And yet that they *are* past, doth make us mourn :
Is this the instinct of mortality
Which makes us grudge each step that leads us on
to die ?

It matters not. We have no power to stay
Time's even march, or slack his rapid way ;
Welcome or not,—to sad or cheerful homes,
Dreaded or longed for,—wintry Christmas comes !
From the rich lord whose ermined limbs scarce know
How chill the air, when dim with drifting snow,
To the poor wretch whose scanty store denies
A purchased shelter from th' inclement skies ;
From the young school-boy who with glowing hands
Lifts the dear latch, and on *home's* threshold stands,
Gazes with dazzled eyes a moment round
And gains his mother's breast with one glad bound ;—

To the grave statesman, full of plodding care,
With wrinkled brow, and meditative air ;
Plotting and planning—harassed, worn, and vexed,
Dreaming throughout *this* Christmas of the *next*,
And in the chance of *future* change or strife
Losing the present of his weary life ;—
To all it comes ! but not to all the same,
Different its aspect, though unchanged the name.
And even as in the lantern's magic glass
Thin shadowy forms, and silent figures pass,
So in the fleeting visions of my mind
The fancied scenes from many a home I find.

Lo ! where beside the grey and stormy deep,
A young fair widow steals away to weep.
One of a noble lineage is she
Noblest of England's aristocracy—
Yet nobler in themselves—proud, pure, and good,
A fair and bright, and gentle sisterhood ;

Who, happy wives,—fond mothers,—practise all
The peasant-virtues in each gilded hall.

(Ah ! happy *thou*, proud parent, who can stand
And watch thy lilies blooming through the land ;
Conscious, while for their *woe* thy spirit grieves
No blight *but* woe shall ever stain their leaves.)

Good, fair, and gentle, like the rest is she,
Yet sorrow's hand hath touched her heavily ;
To *her*, the Christmas brings no pleasant tone,
For she hath not been used to smile *alone*,
Save when she teaches (ah ! most bitter joy !)
The *father's* lessons to his gentle boy*.

No fickle puppet of the clamorous crowd
Was he she mourns, with sorrow “ deep, not loud ;”
His were high birth and honour, manly sense,
An earnest heart, and gentle eloquence,

* Lives of the most Eminent Sovereigns of Modern Europe.
Written by a Father for the Instruction and Amusement of his
eldest Son.

The stable virtues of a generous mind—
The varied talents of a taste refined,
Loved by his friends—respected by his foes—
Too soon, alas ! did such a being close.
Still o'er the graceful verse our head is bent,
Wrapt in its true, and tender sentiment;
Still do we see the well-known name appear
Among the tributes for the coming year* ;
And start to think, ere *this* had past away,
Thy noble soul had sunk beneath thy frame's decay.

And thou ! fair royal boy,† who seekest still
Far from our homes, the aid of foreign skill;
When glittering halls are garlanded and hung,
When Christmas games are played, and carols sung !

* Vide the Keepsake for 1834.—“To my Native Place,” by Lord Dover.

† Prince George of Cumberland is now at Berlin under the care of a celebrated foreign practitioner.

When merry shouts are ringing through the air,
And pleasures planned, in which *thou* canst not
share—

Oh ! let us not forget thee ; many a night
Thine eyes have gaily caught those tapers bright,
And now thy day itself receives no light !

Oft have I seen thee with a smiling glance,
Choose thy young partner for the happy dance ;
And blest thee, as thy fair and flushing cheek
Turned proudly to that gentle one to speak.

'Midst all the pomp that chains the courtly line,
The eager grace of childhood still was thine :—
The eager grace of childhood, and its kope,
Boundless beyond imaginable scope.

Ah ! let us not forget thee—for to *thee*
Dark must the coming of the Christmas be !
But in the hours of holy fervour pray
To Him the Just, who gives and takes away,

That hope's bright dawn within thy heart may rise,
And the blue morning steal upon thine eyes :
And thou, in after years remembering still
The visiting of thy Creator's will,
Shall give thine alms and gentle words to all
Whom such a mournful darkness may enthrall.
The poor who feel the curse, 'neath which even thou,
With all thy royal power was forced to bow !

My spirit pauses—and sends out its glance
Far where are twined the sunny vines of France !
There a sad circle sit, whose former day
Was always cheerful, and was often gay.
Young Arabella * ! 'tis for *thee* they weep,
Who in thy lifetime never caused a tear—
And therefore is their grief more sad and deep
In the proportion in which thou wert dear.

* Daughter of the late Harry Scott, Esq.

Thou hadst a dancing step, a bird-like voice,
A clear bright eye—a look that *said* “rejoice!”
And many loved thee. Thou hast mocked them all
For dreaming earthly love thy soul could thrall,
And thou hast glided to thy quiet rest,
With the heaped mould upon thy virgin breast.
Thy spirit-eyes were all too blue and bright
To live reflecting aught but Heaven’s own light,
And Heaven hath spared thee all those hours of pain,
Which might be thine if thou wert here again.
Thy woman’s lot is spared thee—bitter fears,
Wild jealousies, and disregarded tears,
And hopes, which, cankered by some eating worm,
Like that which fed upon thy budding form,
Live on for long in bright unseen decay,
And in some sudden sorrow die away!
But they who lost thee—to *their* grieving hearts
Such thoughts no comfort brings—no balm imparts—

Through many a day they still must sit and mourn
With selfish love, that sighs for thy return ;
And thy poor mother with a double woe
Droops her coifed head beneath this second blow,
And shrieks at Death, who with relentless stroke
Laid low the gentle flower beside the parent oak.

Adventurous Ross ! methinks *thy* home I see,
Where thy proud child stands at his father's knee ;
And while thy lips of strange wild dangers tell,
(Well may'st thou paint them who didst brave them
well,)

Feels rising strong within his youthful breast
Love of adventure ; scorn of idle rest ;
Fearlessness ; heart to suffer ; soul to dare ;
Untiring hope and generous wish to share.
All that, when language slow the thought imparts,
Comes with that one word *sailor* to our hearts.

Safe in the peaceful haven of thy home,
Let not rash spirit move thee now to roam ;
Tempt not thy fortune—linger by *his* side,
And when *he* fain would wander, be his guide :
Lead him in fancy to those northern snows,
Where the long night no genial morning knows ;
'Mid the ribbed ice, whose frozen bounds, they say,
Make England's Christmas seem a summer's day,
And while the lessening circle round thee draws
Too fond, for doubt,—too eager, for applause,—
While to flushed cheek and sparkling eye, the blaze
Of the warm hearth-fire, sends reflected rays—
Pour in thy young companion's eager ears
Wild stories told with smiles, and listened to with tears.

William of England—sovereign of the isle,
Where fickle Fortune deals her steadiest smile,
Well is thy kingdom fenced and guarded round,
When hearts like these upon its soil are found,—

And generous wert thou when thy kind arms prest

A brother sailor to the royal breast.

Oh ! be it long, my country, ere thy name

Shall furnish fewer to the lists of fame.

Still be thy daughters kind, and fair, and true ;

Still be thy sons a hardy generous crew,

Still may thy years all peaceful glide away,

Nor wars disturb, nor vexing feuds decay.

May individual grief—the private woe,

Be all the gloom thy poet's song shall know ;

And spite of these (in *these* all have their part),

May England's Christmas cheer the poor man's
glowing heart.

ON THE
DEATH OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THEY mourn the minstrel of the North

In many a hall and many a bower—

They mourn the soul of sterling worth,

They mourn the pen of magic power.

For him does Scotland's hardy son

Tread with slow step the birchen shade

While proud, yet grieved, his gallant heart

Swells high beneath the folded plaid.

There, gazing on the purple hill—

The sheeted lake—the torrent's fall—

He weeps the vanished muse, whose power,

Rich in wild words, could paint them all !

For him the merry stranger's eye

(Who read in a translated tongue,

With half its wit obscured and hid,

The song through many a nation sung)

Droops o'er the page—and seeks in vain

Amid the names of lesser note

One that may fill *his* vacant place,

And write as he, the mighty, wrote.

For him the patriot inly sighs—

For him the gentle maiden grieves—

With him the impetuous youth regrets

The wild romance, no other weaves—

The wild romance, which many a night
Hath wrapt his soul in spell so strong
That he hath almost deemed himself
The hero of the minstrel's song :
The cheek of childhood at the sound,
With momentary tears is wet—
And startled nations pause to mourn—
But he hath glory greater yet.
In his own home, salt tears are wept—
In his own home, fond eyes are dim—
Round his own hearth-stone grieving hearts
And quivering lips remember *him* !
Through many a land, with mournful note
Let proud tradition praise his name—
Let marble monuments arise,
And all that genius gave proclaim—
Still, in that quiet spot, his *home*,
A monument more proud shall be ;

And dying men shall paint his worth
Upon their children's memory,
And mingle with the great man's life
The story of the good man's end ;
And while they mourn th' inspired soul,
Weep for the father and the friend !

THE END.

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